Women and Crime for Economic Gain

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
Northumbria University
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Northumbria
School of Arts and Social Sciences

May 2005

ABSTRACT

This thesis presents a criminological exploration of the relationship between women and the notion of the economic. The contention is that there remain gaps in our empirical inquiries and in our theorising about women who commit crimes for economic gain. The organising framework is the experience and motivations of women who do economic crime. The thesis is concerned with an investigation that is conducted through both empirical research and a theoretical examination of women's motivations to do economic crime.

Initially the thesis grapples with the problems of clarifying what constitute the economic crimes of women attempting to further understand and appreciate female economic criminality. Empirical evidence is brought to bear on the variety and extent of women's criminality, initial and post-hoc reasons and justifications for women's economic crime, means and methods of carrying out crimes and women's views of themselves as offenders. Focussing in particular upon the offence of shoplifting as an example of a crime in which women tend to specialise, the investigation explores women's motivations for doing shoplifting in some detail. This leads to an examination of economic need and economic greed in a gendered context.

The key issues explored are women's motivations for and experiences of economic crime and an interrogation of the concept of the economic in relation to women's crime. The unfolding analysis and emergent theorising informs our understanding of women's motivations to do crime for economic gain and through challenging criminologically dominant appreciations of the economic, the thesis argues towards a more thoroughly gendered understanding of the concept of the economic.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank a number of people for their assistance and support. First of all, I am indebted to the people who allowed themselves to be interviewed, especially the women who had offended. My thanks too are due to Barbara Hudson and Mary Mellor, who, over the years have influenced my intellectual development and gently but persistently kept me to task. I owe a special word of thanks to Andrew McCulloch, my colleague at Northumbria who read the work for sense and grammar. And finally a personal thanks to Damian, Rory and Callum Pye, who helped me to keep a sense of perspective as well as my mum and dad for approving of everything I do.

DECLARATION

This work has not been submitted for any other award and is my own work. Some of the material has been used in the following publications:

Davies, P. Chapter 4 'Doing Interviews with Female Offenders' pages 82-96 in Jupp, V. Davies, P. and Francis, P. (eds) (2000) *Doing Criminological Research* London: Sage. ISBN 0 7619 6508 4 / 6509 2

Davies, P. (forthcoming December 2003) 'Is Economic Crime a Man's Game?' *Feminist Theory* Vol. 4(3)

Davies, P. (2003b) 'Women and Crime: doing it for the kids?', *Criminal Justice Matters* No. 50 Winter 29-29

Davies, P. (2003c) 'Women, Crime and Work: gender and the labour market', *Criminal Justice Matters,* No. 53 Autumn 18-19

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

(i) Aims of the Thesis

The aim of the thesis is to explore and understand the experience and investigate the motivations of women who commit crime for economic gain. The research is both theoretical and empirical. Although the concern is with the general and fundamental questions of how and why women commit crime for economic gain, the focus is on shoplifting whilst drugs and prostitution related offending are also explored as a minor theme. In relation to all these offences, the apparently opposite economic motivations of need and greed are explored.

Two criminological questions broadly drive the inquiry. The first is the extent to which women's criminality can be recognised in 'economic' or 'economy' terms as demonstrated in their crime talk about their activities and in particular their doing of crime. Are women talking in something akin to 'economy' terms? How do women articulate their crime stories and is economic language part of their vocabularies? The second criminological question is whether criminal women emerge as economic agents in their own right. To what extent is their crime for economic gain a rational response, choice or decision? Is criminal economic rationalism or rational action discernable? The study is therefore concerned to examine what justifications and explanations women offer for their crimes and to discover what motivations are evident within these explanations. The study, through exploring and interrogating the concept of the economic in relations to women's crime at different levels, illustrates

the various representations of the economic that emerge within the women's explanations.

Women who engage in crime have complex and highly gendered relationships to the economic and this forces the concept of the economic to become problematised. Working within the context of the economic and the gender patterning of women's crime brings forward several reasons for revisiting and further examining women's motivations for doing the more acquisitive and instrumental types of crimes that generally constitute economic crimes. Men and women appear differently motivated to commit crime and Walklate (2001) has questioned whether or not this is empirically supported. This thesis sheds some light on this by investigating and empirically researching omissions within criminological research and theory. It explores whether or not there are inconsistencies between the data on female offending and the theoretical work connected to women, gender and crime. The thesis addresses a feminist question of whether the criminological literature is adequate to explain women's various levels of participation in economic crime and connections to economic forms of criminality.

Fundamentally, the thesis is a critical examination of women's motives for doing economic crime and criminality. The thesis therefore raises questions at a number of levels and around a number of themes, particularly the lack of explanation of women's crime for economic gain in economic terms. Ultimately the aim is to provide the theoretical basis for a more comprehensive explanatory framework of the behaviour of women who commit crime for economic gain.

(ii) Background - Women and Economic Crime: Empirical gaps and theoretical connections

Within criminology there are some domains that have never been subjected to a gendered analysis and others still where the 'woman' question is only partially addressed. In foregrounding women's motivations for doing economic crime, gender and the notion of the economic require prioritising and problematising. The need to focus more carefully upon the nature of women's motivations to do specific crimes suggests an empirical investigation and theoretical re-examination. Furthermore, whilst there is some key criminological literature that clearly helps to understand the crimes that women do and their motivations for doing them, much of this can be female-gender challenged. For example, criminological scholarship (e.g. Taylor 1999) that sees the nature of contemporary market society as key to understanding crime is increasingly sophisticated. Class and economic power are prioritised in such works, whilst women's roles and contributions remain largely invisible. This literature is useful as it emphasises the mutual embeddedness of crime and markets, but for feminist theoreticians there remain inherent problems. Often gender is only partially explored through masculinity, femininity is ignored and thus there are few examples or analyses of women doing crime. Furthermore, a limited notion of the economic – simply perceived as the market - obscures any appreciation of women's contributions to the informal and criminal economies and clouds understanding of women as doers of economic crime.

From the outset it was evident that defining or classifying the economic crimes of women itself requires combining several forms of secondary data. The criminological

literature that has in effect 'economic crimes' at its heart, reveals a number of problems with existing 'definitions' and with loose 'classifications'. These problems formed an important aspect to the study in its early stages when it was recognised that primary data might be informative also. Part of this investigation therefore involved conducting an e-mail survey of criminologists as well as the exploration of secondary data (see Chapters Two and Four). The task of detailing and mapping out definitions, classifications and meanings of key terms and concepts such as economic crime, economic criminality, property crime, instrumental crime and so on was an instructive yet frustrating exercise that shed light on the complex ambiguities surrounding common uses of such concepts and a general inattention to their gendered nature. My early inquiries brought to the fore very strongly the need to challenge assumptions from within a gendered framework. Indeed in reviewing criminologists' uses of the notion of 'economic crime' I suggest that criminological understanding in relation to crime for economic gain is poor and that gender freedom/blindness/specificity variously operate (Davies 2003a).

The 'generalisability problem' (Daly and Chesney-Lind 1988) concerns whether or not general theories take account, or could take account, of both women's and men's criminality. The relevant criminological literature which generally addresses the notion of economic motivations is assessed. This exercise is performed through a gendered lens and in consequence the notion of the economic as the market is problematised. In turn, this leads to an interrogation of women, crime and rationalism. If women commit crime instrumentally malestream classical criminological anomie theory and specifically Cohen's (1955) 'delinquent solution', Merton's (1938) 'criminal adaptations' and Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) 'legal and illegal

opportunities' and other connections between crime and work need to be questioned. By exploring, probing and comparing aspects of previous theorising in so far as they relate to women we can gain some insight into how women are motivated to do crime in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century.

Inspiration from feminist criminology has been of paramount importance. Women as offenders have not always been a key feature of criminological inquiry but since Carol Smart's publication of *Women Crime and Social Control* in 1976 the relative neglect of women in criminology has been opposed. The feminist critique had a tremendous impact upon criminology and empirical inquiry and feminist inspired theoretical work flourished. Women and girls have now been systematically examined in several criminal justice contexts, including as offenders, albeit by a small group of feminist criminologists. Indeed, throughout the 1980s a plethora of criminological research emerged relating to gender differences in various parts of the criminal justice system and questions of harshness/leniency, bias and sexism for example have now been well served by empirical inquiry.

Simultaneously, sociological and criminological theorising in relation to class and gender has moved forward in leaps and bounds with multiple and overlapping forms of social inequality increasingly seen as impacting upon crime, offending, social control and punishment. Empirically informed theorising has also been a key feature of feminist criminologists work since the 1980s. Notable is the work of Pat Carlen in the UK (1985, 1988, 1990, 1996, 1998, 2002), and together with Worrall (1987, 2004), as well as Eaton (1986, 1993), Gelsthorpe (1989, 1994), Gelsthorpe and Morris (1994), Hedderman and Gelsthorpe (1997), Heidensohn (1985, 1989, 1996, 1997),

Worrall (1990, 2002). A new wave of feminist criminologists including Daly (1994), Maher (1997) and Miller (1998, 2001) has persisted in the task of making the subject of offending behaviour empirically grounded and understood in gendered terms.

However, where women as offenders have been the primary focal point, explanations for their involvement in crime have tended to dwell for the most part on issues concerned with poverty and marginalisation and similar such forms of need and want, to the nearly complete exclusion of greedy needs and desires, excitement and other explanations that more often feature in mainstream criminological theorising. Individual female offenders are often characterised unwittingly but largely, as passive, acted upon by social, economic and environmental forces, which have shaped their actions. Economic marginalisation, poverty, inequalities and economic dependency push marginal and vulnerable women – particularly as young mothers – into crime. Some approaches verge upon a form of sociological determinism but such accounts of female offenders lives and activities may not be consistent with women's motives for doing crime. When women's motivations rather than others' post-hoc justifications are foregrounded and when criminal women's voices are properly heard, there is evidence in feminist empirical work that supports different theoretical conclusions. Some feminist criminologists have explored economic motivations and in particular the consequences of the 'criminalisation of poverty' for criminal women. The work of Pat Carlen is exemplary in this respect and her work is more thoroughly discussed in Chapter Two. Nevertheless, most of those economic explanations that have been thoroughly examined tend to be restricted to versions that view the offending behaviour of women as less than purposeful.

Criminal women's responses to their marginalized socio-economic positions, feminists agree, is often the result of a complex of forces and responses related to their immediate and structural circumstances. Whilst this does not entirely preclude such women from choosing another lifestyle or 'solution' it is almost always presented as an inevitable outcome. Rather, women as offenders are seen as being propelled into action of an illegitimate nature, to make ends meet, that is, to 'survive'. Some women's criminality, as Carlen has briefly acknowledged, appears more rational and genuinely pursuant of pecuniary reward (Carlen, 1985; Carlen and Worrall, 1987; Carlen 1988) or more wilfully economic in nature (Davies, 1999; Hudson, 2002) than the feminisation of poverty thesis implies. Persuasive and powerfully evidenced, argued and theorised work from within feminist criminology often also serves to obscure the exceptions to the rule, the minor threads, the significant minorities that are evident and that occasionally suggests that some crime done by some women, some of the time might be understood under a rather different range of motives.

Some scholars are beginning to investigate through imaginative theorising on the gendered nature of crime both gender-difference and gender similarity in crime. Gender can now be viewed as a situated accomplishment; girls and boys 'do' masculinity and femininity. Crime is used as a resource for 'doing-gender': in other words male youth crime is a resource used for accomplishing masculinity (Messerschmidt 1994, 1995). These new theoretical constructs might be useful in respect of more closely examining women's motivations to do violent types of crime as well as economic crimes: girls might achieve femininity through doing shoplifting,

for example. The literature relating to the development of these theoretical constructs is therefore also considered in Chapter Two.

Sophisticated feminist scholarship still only partially explains why women engage in 'economic crimes'. 'Economic crimes' might not be such backward looking solutions to women's problems. Rather, 'economic crimes' might be solutions to women's ambitions to achieve. Women might therefore, be more actively resisting male subordination and economic marginalisation than current theorising implies. If the majority of the criminal activities that women do are property crimes, they might be crimes that are financially motivated and committed as a rational response to a lack of money or ability to obtain sufficient money from traditional and legitimate sources. Why, for example, are we so reluctant to believe that some women can mean to do crime and intend or elect to do crimes for economic gain? Is it possible that these women might be using crime as a resource for moving from exploitation to independence? These criminal women might be economically rational, like 'economic men', and they might be rational and purposeful in their actions. These women might be showing consistency with economic rationalism. Thus some crimes might be primarily committed, at least by some women, for different economic reasons than much feminist theorising implies.

Some types of criminal activity that women and girls take part in might be strictly financially motivated. Are, for example, prostitution, shoplifting, theft, fraud and forgery and drugs related offences pursued purely for money? Are such crimes economic crimes? Can economic need be variously interpreted? Is economic greed in evidence? Some aspects of these interesting questions are incorporated into the

specific research questions identified below. There are identifiable gaps in the criminological literature and a problem of theoretical connectedness. What has emerged is a set of research questions focussed around women's motivations to do economic crime in the context of both need and greed, and in the context of women's rationalism.

(iii) The Research Questions

This research allows for new ways of theorising to emerge from the inquiry as well as for the comparison of the data with existing theory.

The research aims to

- explore existing evidence from official criminal statistics and also from observational, survey and secondary data sources the gender patterning of crime and women's economic crimes;
- investigate criminal women's motives to do economic crimes through conducting interviews with offending women;
- examine the variety and extent of women's criminality, their initial and post-hoc reasons and justifications for specific instances of criminality, their means and methods of carrying out crimes, and their views of themselves as offenders;
- explore and compare in the light of the empirical data, existing theoretical connections and debates about women's experiences and motivations to do economic crime and the gender patterning of crime

This criminological inquiry provides a solid evidential basis from which to begin to develop a theoretical framework for

- more comprehensively understanding women's motivations for doing crime for economic gain; and
- a more thorough gendered understanding of the concept of the economic.

(iv) Methodological Issues

Several aspects of the methodological approach adopted in the study have already been signposted. The details of how the research was executed, including the methodology, research design and techniques and other aspects related to the process of doing the fieldwork, are discussed in Chapter Three. This section merely highlights the major features of the methodological approach. This section also addresses how the interchange between problem, theory and method is influenced by feminism.

With direct reference to the research aims identified on page 9, in order to explore the gender patterning of crime and of women's economic crimes, I examine existing evidence from the 'official' *Criminal Statistics: England and Wales* (Home Office annually). Women's overall offending levels and patterns are illustrated and compared over time and court based data from the same official sources is scrutinised. Official glossaries of terms are also examined and all of these findings are compared with observational data obtained from proceedings at local Magistrates and Crown Courts and also with local courts listings and databases. This aspect of the research

was also complemented by the findings from an e-mail survey conducted amongst criminologists to ascertain what constitutes economic crimes.

My main source of data was face-to-face interviews with women who had been criminalized. The semi-structured interviews focussed upon core areas. These were the variety and extent of women's criminality, their initial and post-hoc reasons and justifications for specific instances of criminality, their means and methods of carrying out crimes, and their views of themselves as offenders.

The analysis of the interview data identified key motivational themes. I also interrogated the data for allusions to the economic and the various ways of representing the notion of the economic. Finally the data was scrutinised to ascertain the degrees of rationalism evident in the women's discussions of how and why they did crime for economic gain. Finally, I tested my empirical data against existing theory.

The interchange between problem, theory and method has also been signposted and this has indicated that the inquiry is inter-disciplinary, empirical, theoretically comparative, emergent and original. Overall the thesis is inspired and influenced by feminism and in this sense I acknowledge the intrusion of politics and values in the planning, formulating and doing of research (May 1997, Sapsford and Jupp 1996, Hughes 2000). Feminist research practice has been explored by various writers (Cain 1994, Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1994; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Naffine, 1997; Stanley and Wise, 1993) and many others have brought their own feminist perspective to bear on their fieldwork and analysis of different areas of criminology and sociology

(See for example Carlen and colleagues 1985 - 2004). Such work demonstrates that there is no single feminist viewpoint or perspective. Nevertheless as Naffine has argued:

> *Many feminists are of the view that the angle from which the dominant class views the world, is one which provides a poor field of vision. Subjugation, and reflection upon that status, makes for a better appreciation of the world* (Naffine, 1997: 51).

Feminist approaches usually attempt not to be exploitative but to be appreciative of the position of women whilst Jupp et al suggests reflexivity '*is a vital part of demonstrating the factors which have contributed to the social production of knowledge'* (Juoo et al., 2000:169). The research aims, questions, design and the overall perspective are intended to bear the hallmarks of reflexive feminist research principles. Thus, from the outset, the feminist orientation is evident in the conscious choices about the topic area explored and research questions formulated. These have a specific gender bias – women's motivations to do economic crime – and the overall aim and specific research questions are formulated and explored by a female researcher seeking to engage in good reflexive research practices. In the description of the aims and research questions and the background to the study I reveal a perspective which sees patriarchal structures, marginalisation, sexism, exploitation and feminist critiques pertaining to gender freedom/blindness/specificity as key concepts. Such signposting demonstrates feminist consciousness, reflexivity, and the standpoint of 'women'. As Hudson (2000:185) has pointed out '*the method of feminist standpoint criminology involves 'asking the women question''* and that includes asking how criminological theories affect women as well as why and how women are motivated to commit crime.

(v) Structure of the Thesis

The initial concern of this thesis, in accordance with the method outlined above, is to provide an overview of the existing evidence and literature on women, crime, criminality and the notion of the economic. In essence, the next chapter reviews how women as offenders feature in the crime and criminality literature. It addresses the definition of economic crimes, and this includes an analysis of the findings arising from an e-mail survey of criminologists. The chapter generally begins to problematise the concept of the economic as it applies to women and in particular the economic as represented and connected to criminal economies and to the market. The chapter also specifically addresses connections between women, crime and rationalism and incorporates a summary of the common interpretations of women's motivations for doing economic crime.

Chapter Three describes in full the methodology, research design, research techniques employed and other aspects related to the fieldwork. Entitled 'Researching Women and Crime for Economic Gain' the chapter includes a full discussion of the literature and how the literature was again interrogated after the data analysis had been conducted. The decisions made about data collection through the use of interviews and details on the process of doing interviews with female offenders are discussed. Access, data recording techniques, ethics, politics, validity are addressed as well as issues relating to data presentation, analysis, case study and theory building.

Chapter Four begins the data analysis and presents an outline of female offending patterns together with a classification of women's 'official' criminal activities. These are considered in the light of the evaluation of economic crimes as they apply to women and which draws upon the e-mail survey data as discussed in Chapter Two. Chapter Five presents an overview of the interview data and sample portraits of the women interviewed. It also presents findings on the women's criminality together with some contextualising of their offending patterns. Chapter Six explores these findings in more detail. It focuses upon crime for economic gain and in particular on the 'grafting' habits of female professional shoplifters, the motivations for female offending as they relate to the notion of need and connections between shoplifting and drugs. Chapter Seven presents further in depth findings from the qualitative interviews by using analytical case studies relating to shoplifting as women's business. This chapter explores some of the themes identified in previous chapters that relate to the notion of women's and others' economic needs and more specifically the economic greed of women and others.

Chapter Eight begins to develop the theoretical implications and formulations emerging from the data in the previous four chapters. Entitled, 'Needy and Greedy?: The Economic and the Rational', this chapter presents a summary of the various representations of the economic and re-visits the range of common interpretations of women's motivations for doing economic crime as presented in Chapter Two. It shows that women's rationalism is a 'connected' rather than an individualised form of rationalism. Women's needs and greed is connected to the needs and greed of others. Even drug-affected women do not appear to succumb totally to the hedonistic

seductions of crime. The notion of 'provisioning', a concept from feminist economics explains some of the empirical findings.

Chapter Nine concludes on 'Women and Crime for Gain: Material Crime and Material Women'. This chapter analytically draws together women's experiences and motivations for doing crime for economic gain and comments upon the broader implications for women, crime, criminality and the notion of the economic. This chapter draws the various threads of the study together. In particular, it offers some insights drawn from the empirical research and analysis and on the notion of the economic as the fundamental organising framework and as key to the better understanding of women's crime.

CHAPTER TWO

WOMEN, CRIME, CRIMINALITY AND THE ECONOMIC

(i) Introduction

This chapter presents a full discussion of the key literature on women and crime, women's criminality and the notion of the economic. It begins with an outline of how women feature in criminal economies and explores how women's experiences of crime are gender patterned and how the notion of economic crime is variously conceptualised. This incorporates the findings arising from an e-mail survey of criminologists. The survey was conducted during the course of my analysis of the literature where very loose and vague allusions to the notion of economic crime were apparent. A number of postgraduate and professional criminologists were e-mailed in order to obtain a selection of opinions on and illustrations of what constitutes economic crimes. My analysis of the opinions and examples obtained from this survey is combined with my evaluation of the relevant literature. This evaluation also considers how understandings and appreciations of economic crimes impact upon theoretical accounts of female criminality. The critique concludes that there is a broad spectrum of criminological opinion and thought ranging from being gender-free to gender-specific and sexist. However, the literature that specifically theorises women's motivations to do crime, is becoming increasingly feminist and sophisticated. Integral to all of this critical analysis is an examination of the key assumptions regarding the notion of the economic and the final part of the chapter specifically considers the connections between women, crime and rationalism. Chapter Two therefore focuses

upon the gender patterning of crime and it also incorporates a summary of the theoretical interpretations of women's motivations for doing economic crime.

(ii) Criminal Economies - and Women?

Modern society is routinely characterised as a 'risk society' (Beck 1992). One edited compilation of key criminological questions for the 21st Century by Carlen and Morgan (1999) demonstrates how the current economic climate is similarly viewed within criminology. Economic developments and market uncertainties feature significantly in risk society and individualised, 'risk managerial' and 'market oriented' standpoints affect significantly how crime and justice are viewed (Carlen and Morgan, 1993:3).

The empirical evidence regarding female offending patterns and styles suggests that gender is a key variable in explaining differences in law-breaking behaviour. Women engage in serious and violent crimes at a much lesser rate than men do. Women and girls are more frequently convicted of property crimes and theft than any other type of crime. It can be safely assumed that women as economic crime offenders - like men - operate within the environs of criminal economies. Therefore, an assessment of the relevant literature might shed light on the crimes women do. Such economies incorporate jobs, work and occupational activities that are outside, or on the margins, of the formal economy where unregistered means of maximising incomes, virtually illegal forms of work and economic exchanges and deals are done. Writers drawing upon different academic perspectives and disciplines have characterised crime from an occupational perspective. These approaches to the study of crime have illuminated the diverse nature of relationships between work and employment and have offered a

cursory view of some relatively invisible connections between crimes and work. The work raised problems related to gendering the notion of economic rationalism.

There have been many attempts to map the informal/unofficial/underground/ /shadow/subterranean economies by economists (See Heertje et al. 1982; Mattera, 1985; Smith, 1986; Bawly, 1982). Typical is Smith (1986) who provides examples of activities in the 'Shadow Economy' divided into two broad categories. First, there is the 'black economy'[1] and second, there is the 'non-market shadow economy'. Criminal activities feature in the 'black economy' under a sub-category entitled 'households and individuals'. This includes incomes not declared for tax and the production of illegal goods and services. A second sub-category is 'private companies'. These activities include 'off the books' business and false accounting mechanisms. For economists' purposes it is the amount of income generated within these categories that is important in order to aggregate the 'real' size of the shadow economy in financial terms. Whilst such work dates from the 1980's and earlier, more recent work by Burrows, (1991) has similarly concentrated exclusively on the fiscal aspects of such economies. Indeed, with respect to most analyses of informal and criminal economies, the legacy of fiscal dominance and concern remains strong.

In the extensive literature review by Harding and Jenkins in *The Myth of the Hidden Economy* (1989) we are offered further insight and access to the activities and actors who participate in informal and criminal economies. This work offers useful observations concerning forms of economic activity and their location on scales of

[1] The hidden/illegal economy is no longer referred to as the 'black economy' because of the obvious racist overtones. In this thesis the phrase is only used when referring to earlier work which specifically used this description.

formality/informality and work/employment. They present these as continuums, which allows considerable flexibility in the categorisation of activities. Criminal activities thus can range from crime to fiddles to outright corruption, but there is little further elaboration on which other types of activities might be placed on the continuum. Nor does the typology appear to adequately represent the degree of formality belonging to certain types of illegal activity. The blurred distinctions between work and employment are also addressed by MacDonald who has raised the question of different allegiances to work, including the options of alternative ways of working in the face of restricted avenues for legitimate employment (1994). Primarily concerned with changing cultures of work, MacDonald also discovered differing degrees of illegality, notably 'fiddly jobs', that is, working whilst claiming benefits or what others have called 'doing the double' or 'doubling up' (Fagan and Freeman 1999). Although MacDonald does not systematically use or scrutinize crime data, the study does suggest that there is material ripe for empirical research and criminological theorizing.

Econometric and sociological approaches to studying distinctions between the informal and formal sectors have included a focus upon the development process and urban economies as well as allegiances to work. Other approaches have a more distinct criminological framework. Mars' (1994) typology of work and its rewards and earlier work belonging to Henry (1978, 1981) and Ditton (1977) are examples. Mars (1974, 1994) provides a typology of work and its rewards drawing attention to the mirroring of practices between the informal/criminal and the formal/legal and between official/unofficial/alternative rewards and individual rewards. According to Mars, only combinations of receipts from several of these reward categories comprise

a person's total rewards from work. (Mars, 1994: 8). In respect of rewards from extra legal or illegal activities these include 'criminal rewards' (professional crime and prostitution), 'hidden economy rewards' (pilfering, overcharging) and 'black economy' rewards (unregistered production and service organizations). It appears fairly common in classic criminological studies to assume that the informal/criminal economy is an economy which is comparable to the formal or regular economy. The work of Henry (1978, 1981), when it touches upon the notion of a hidden criminal economy, calls attention to the need to include unrecorded or undetected crime. Chambliss (1978) and Klockars (1975) have illustrated how the criminal economy is comparable to the regular economy in more specific analyses of crime categories including organized crime, fencing, and the Mafia. Conklin (1977) in more general terms refers to how the criminal enterprise can be clothed by, 'confusing normality' and how activities can be 'illegal but not criminal'. This tradition is seen to continue in the area of white collar crime in particular in the work of Block (1991) and Levi (1987) who points out how illegal and legitimate interests often merge. Punch tells us how businessmen's deviant practices are perceived by many of the actors 'as 'normal' routine (even when concealed)' (Punch 1996:245). Hobbs (1988) has also drawn attention to the way in which his subjects are just 'doing the business' (See also Hobbs 1995, 1997; Ruggiero 1996, 2000). Criminologically, however, the term 'informal economy' signifies nothing more than an indistinct reference to something outside of the formal economy and is rather vaguely used to refer to a market-like environment in which additional or alternative forms of activity and exchange are negotiated. These claims are explored more thoroughly later in this chapter.

Both Mars (1994) and Smith's (1986) analyses imply that some forms of hidden economic activity are work related (i.e. they are a spin-off of legitimate work roles and/or that illegal work routines exist in their own right i.e. prostitution and professional forms of crime). Less characteristic of the economists' approach is that part of Mar's work that expands on the analysis of roles by analyzing jobs according to four distinct groups of jobs. He calls these vulture, wolfpack, donkey and hawk jobs. These groupings begin to look more closely at the actors involved in illegitimate activities and as informal routines adopted in the workplace. Criminologically, the more specific connections between crime and work are developed in some key classic studies that have come to define this approach. Indeed, as Fagan and Freeman (1999) point out, there is a long and rich criminological tradition of studying crime from an occupational perspective. Chambliss portrays illegal networks, corruption and illegal business on a grandiose scale. Other examples are Sutherland 1937, 1949; Shaw 1930; Maurer 1940, 1964; Hall 1952; Cressey 1953; Polsky 1967; and Jackson 1968. The informal and criminal economies are here brought to light through the vivid illustrations of studies of people who think about crime as their work. For the most part, detailed studies of those who take part in crime within the informal economy are now dated (Klockars, 1975; McIntosh, 1975; Chambliss, 1978; Maguire, 1982; McLeod, 1982; Bennett and Wright, 1984; Walsh; 1986). Although, more recently in the areas of drugs, professional, business, corporate and white-collar crimes Ruggiero, South and colleagues (1992, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1988, 2000, 2002) Hobbs (1988, 1995, 1997) Braithwaite (1986), Punch (1996, 2000) and Levi (1994, 1995) provide useful insights into the motivations and lifestyles of criminal men and youth and deviant entrepreneurial activities.

The above account of some of the different disciplinary approaches to the study of criminal economies serves to illustrate some of the problematic issues surrounding definitions and boundaries, and visible and invisible features of crime. Simultaneously, it raises some interesting questions regarding the gendered nature of allegiances to both formal and legal work patterns and informal and illegal crime and work connections. Debates around the classification of crime are ongoing, especially in respect of the contested definitions of organised and professional crimes. Uncertain boundary lines between formality and informality, between work and employment, legality and illegality, all add to classificatory and definitional complexity. It is along the continuums and fuzzy boundaries between what is and what is not crime that we are able to discover different varieties of criminality (Shapland 1998) and forms of crime and victimisations that tend to be hidden and invisible. As Nelken (1997) has recently pointed out, the idea of continuums for understanding white-collar crimes is useful. The review above suggests likewise in terms of analysing economic crimes more generally. This finds support from Fagan and Freeman (1999) who similarly argue that crime and legal work represent a continuum of legal and illegal income generating activities.

There has been a concentration by economists on attempts to define various economies solely for the purpose of approximating the size of their contributions to the economy as a whole. Of greater interest to sociologists (and criminologists), as Leonard (1994) points out, is not the size of any particular economy but rather the people who contribute to it. Campbell's unique study of communities in Oxford, Cardiff and Tyneside in the eighties and nineties brings a feminist analysis to bear on the 'riots' of 1991. In graphic detail Campbell draws attention to the '*desperate local*

economies' (Campbell 1993: xi) in which men and women across Britain abide. This work stands alone in terms of its inclusion of women's roles in the maintenance of local informal and criminal markets and women's modes of survival in harsh economic locales. Thus, although women's relationship to the informal economy has been examined in relation to work patterns and the gendered experience of work and men's relationship to criminal economies has been partially examined, women's contributions have not attracted much attention. The classic studies rarely focus upon women, whether as primary or supporting actors in criminal economies.

Despite a resurgence of interest in the generic area of informal/criminal economies and in crime from an occupational perspective where the interest is in those 'doing the business' (Hobbs 1988), there nevertheless remains a relative paucity of theoretically informed empirically based understandings of the lives of women who commit crime. Few authors devote any attention to the gendered nature of allegiances to work. With no claims to being a criminologist, Madeleine Leonard's work (1994) regarding the informal economic activity in Belfast is a singular example of women's ways of making a living outside of the formal wage economy, either as an alternative, or as a supplementary form of income. Criminologically, McLeod's (1982) study is a rare but now dated example of prostitution as women's work and Maher's (1997) study of sexwork in a Brooklyn drug market is a rare recent exception. As she points out, women's position in the informal economy is such that even secondary sector employment is becoming difficult to locate and that little is known about the participation of women or the impact of sex/gender in structuring participation in informal sector work especially in the criminal or drug economy. Thus, although the informal economy has attracted the occasional resurgence of interest (Shapland et al

1998), this does not necessarily signify a specifically criminological interest and we might continue to expect contributions to an understanding of this area to continue to come from disciplines relatively marginal to criminology.

In part, as a consequence of the interdisciplinary nature of the contributions to knowledge on the informal/criminal economies, descriptions, terms and definitions and research focus vary considerably. When first broaching the subject of women's contributions to crimino-economic life and in first exploring the nature of their participation in criminal economies, it is clear that the definition of terms - both of criminal economies and of the notion of the economic - are problematic from the outset. There are loose and vague references from within criminology to criminal economies and there are some useful insights from other disciplines. In reviewing crime work connections elsewhere I have noted that criminal acts can be seen to thrive at the junctures between the legitimate and the illegitimate and within and between the formal and informal settings (Davies 1999). A gender patterned approach to the doing of crime within the environs of criminal economies indicates that women might be particularly active in these invisible terrains. In terms of a gendering of the informal/criminal economies, women's contributions to the informal economy are documented (Bromley and Gerry, 1979; Nelson, 1979; Gilbert and Gugler, 1981; Beneria and Feldman, 1992), whilst - and as argued below – women's criminal contributions to economies, the economic crimes women do and the gender patterning and gendered nature of economic criminality are all much less well documented. There are few instances in the reviewed above where a developed definition of a criminal economy is offered or where explicit descriptions of the range of economic activities might include those that women specialise in. There are also few instances

where masculine bias is not explicit. Thus the literature reviewed above in connection with the doing of illegal work within the environs of criminal economies is generally disappointing from a feminist perspective. With regards to gathering insights into the gender patterning of crime and with regard to the gender patterning of economic crime particularly there are familiar signs of gender freedom and gender blindness and there continue to be several dominant underpinning – often masculinist - assumptions.

In terms of exploring the economic crimes women might appear to do, certainly the whole notion of a criminal economy - as implied in the early descriptive studies of crime from an occupational perspective and in particular from the studies of professional thieves - would appear to be dominated by an assumption of rationality. Almost thirty years ago McIntosh, analysed how crime can be seen 'as a rational economic activity, geared towards making money and minimising risks,' (McIntosh, 1975: 265), and how crime has parallels with legal forms of work in the context of organised and professional crime (McIntosh, 1975). An underpinning assumption of rationality appears to dominate the whole notion of a criminal economy and crime – work connections. This is evident in econometric approaches, in criminological inquiries that have illegal activities as their focal point as well as in early and contemporary studies that have adopted an occupational perspective to crime. The parallels between normal, or legitimate work routines and illegal or illegitimate trades and activities have been noted above. At a more specific level Maguire (1982), Walsh (1986), Bennett and Wright (1984) point to the ways in which criminals go about their burglaries and robberies, the ways they prepare for, talk about and rationalize their activities. It is interesting to note the language that their informants use to describe their activities. Rather than inventing a new language to describe what they do, they

borrow from the language (and routines) used by legitimate jobs of work. They 'learn a trade', 'serve an apprenticeship', prostitutes 'clock on and clock off' (McLeod, 1982). McLeod's new starter prostitutes were offered a form of work training where they were told about the financial prospects of the job and the tricks of the trade to make the job easier and where a type of mentoring system operated (McLeod 1982). This street level view of prostitution resonates with the findings in Walsh's study where burglars seemingly underwent training and on the job apprenticeships. It is evident that rationality is an underpinning assumption within this literature generally and that a particular form of *economic* rationalism emerges as a dominant theme. Whilst the hallmarks of criminal economies and key connections between crime and work appear to be associated with notions of economic rationalism and rationality, there are several ways in which the characterisations of activities in such economies and connections between crime and work are problematic from a feminist perspective. Indeed, there are some major gender issues that warrant exploring in more detail. The notions of women, crime and the economic are emerging as problematic on a number of levels.

(iii) The Gender Patterning of Crime and Work Connections

After Sutherland (1937, 1949) raised questions about criminal work, others continued to explore in the same tradition the occupational perspective of doing crime as work. The more recent revival of interest in connections between crime and work has seen a proliferation of empirical research driven by various agendas including criminological understanding of the connections between crime and non-work, crime and unemployment, crime, poverty and economic marginalisation. Indeed criminological

inquiry has been especially concerned with the myriad of ways in which market society and the economy is key to understanding crime in society. Other research agendas are driven by the threat to profitability in business generally and the retail sector in particular. Thus whilst some have addressed the notion of criminal careers (West and Farrington, 1977; Farrington, 1994) in the late twentieth century others have concentrated on crime as a form of work and the business of crime (Hobbs, 1988, 1995; Punch, 1996), others still have studied crime at work (Gill, 1994, 1996) where the workplace is the scene of criminal activity and victimisation.

Some crime and work connections have been more rigorously empirically researched and theorised within criminology than others. Since the second wave of feminism in the 1970's, sociological research and inquiry has been preoccupied with examining the gendering of the labour market. Some writers have been especially concerned with the problems women have in balancing work and private life (see Oakley 1974), and women's experiences of juggling the burden of work both inside and outside of the family home. Similar complexities can be observed in the intricate triangulation of women, crime and work (Davies 2003) although these connections are far less well researched. Maher (1997) found sex segregation in the illegal market for drugs and a mirroring of exploitative gender relations in the doing of illegal drugs and sex work between the legal and illegal economies.

The participation of women in illegal work raises numerous issues about gender and the nature of work, the boundaries of informal and criminal occupations and gendered allegiances to crime and work many of which are very poorly understood. The gender patterning of crime and work connections is especially neglected. Whilst much of the

work that pre-dates the 1980s tends to be comparatively well developed theoretically, this literature either has a masculine bias and/or gender neutrality is assumed. Certainly, class is prioritised to the virtual exclusion of gender. The apparent salience of masculinity remains to be discovered and certainly as Sommers and colleagues (1992, 1993) point out, we find out scarcely anything about the initiation, escalation and termination of criminal careers by female offenders.

Post 1980s scholarship on crime and work illustrates the great diversity and complexity of work and crime connections. However, gender patterning continues to be ignored and gender-blindness persists in the research design, analysis and theorisation (see for example Cornish and Clarke, 1986; Dorn et al. 1992; Mars 1994; Ruggiero, 1996, 2000)). On the other hand gender specificity is explicit (see for example Bennett and Wright, 1984; Gill, 1994, 1996, 2000; Hobbs, 1988, 1995; Maguire, 1982) so that men and boys equal 'Criminal Man'. It is thus left to feminist critique to conjecture whether 'Criminal Man' really means criminal Man or whether we can generalise to women - or add in women - so that 'Criminal Man' really means criminal man - and woman. Whilst some authors exhibit a keen interest in the crimes of men and boys (the work of Hobbs in particular is a good example here), the theorisation regarding gender is under-developed, in particular the salience of masculinity. Indeed, the diverse crime and work connections that continue to be explored in the late twentieth century often fail the gender test on several counts. Some work appears unconcerned about questions such as who is responsible for frauds and thefts, for example, and simply fails to register the gender dimension alongside the social class of who is doing the crime. Such work in part reflects narrow administrative research agendas and fails to inspire theoretical developments within

criminology. Thus, whilst some of the literature on women who do crime for economic gain is theoretically sophisticated it nevertheless remains wide open to feminist and theoretical critiques.

Crime at Work

Research on crime and victimisation in the retail sector was slow to commence. In 1989 the British Crime Survey (BCS) included for the first time a chapter on 'Crime at Work'. This series of questions produced findings on a whole range of issues pertinent to the workplace as a site for criminal activity. Data was collected on the extent of verbal abuse at work, work as the scene of crime, crime due to workers' jobs, women and work, occupation and risk, and characteristics of job-related offences. Amongst its findings, this survey provides some rudimentary indications about the risks of being in employment outside the home. There is strong evidence for exploring crimes and victimization at work through a gendered lens (Fisher and Gunnison 2001, Upson 2004). The first nationwide commercial sector victimization survey was conducted more than ten years after the first British Crime Survey (Home Office 1982) but now that Retail Crime Surveys are conducted on an annual basis and show a clear gender patterning of crime (Upson 2004). Despite the clear gender patterning of employment in those parts of the retail sector most affected by the single largest category of crime - theft - there has been scant criminological attention to this.

Croall (1989, 1999a) has suggested some male jobs are inherently more risky and hence expose men more routinely to dangerous practices, but the gendering of risk in the workplace remains poorly researched. Despite a rash of publications emanating

from the Home Office Crime Prevention Unit on crimes in different workplaces[2] we learn little about the gendered nature of the crime and victimisation patterns in professions and workplaces. Whilst a number of feminist inspired pieces of empirical research have been carried out in some professions[3] these empirical inquiries tend to have a rather narrow remit restricted to the uncovering of sexism or racism. Few of these approaches have been developed so that we fully appreciate the extent to which economic crime is altogether a gendered business.

The workplace is one particular location which might be susceptible to criminal activity and actions precisely because the job requirements needed and the person specifications that are valued in the workplace, are similar if not identical, to those which make a good criminal. Where women - like men - might be best placed to do criminal work and the business of crime is the workplace. Occupational, corporate and white-collar crimes have been less well researched than other types of crime and criminality. Yet, where the crimes of the powerful have been examined, the gender critique is generally applicable. There would appear to be no rising white-collar women entrepreneurs, no frilly-cuff Ms Saunders or Leesons (Croall 2003; Davies, 2003, Goldstraw 2002). Women clearly engage in a range of theft related categories of crime and commit significant numbers of thefts including employee theft, frauds, pilfering and fiddling and customer theft in particular, but studies repeatedly fail to adequately address the salience of gender alongside class. As criminologists, we have discovered very little about women's roles in workplace crime or women as victimisers at work.

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[2] Examples include burglary of chemist shops (Laycock, 1984), crime in hospitals (Smith, 1987), robbery at building societies (Austin, 1988), Sub-Post offices (Ekblom, 1987)

[3] Examples in the area of criminal justice are well illustrated in the search for sexual and racial harassment and the examination of equal opportunities in the police service (Brown, 1997; Anderson et al, 1993; Commission for Racial Equality, 1996).

Crime as Work

Within criminology we often vaguely distinguish between broad offence groupings or categories. For example, we refer to 'instrumental' and 'expressive' crimes, or to notions of 'crime for kicks and excitement' as opposed to 'poverty crime', 'economic crime' or 'crime for economic gain'. A perspective that looks at crime-as-work focuses upon those crimes most clearly associated with instrumental, acquisitive, poverty and economic crime. Also within criminology, there are several classic theories that focus on ways in which offenders attempt to make a living by illegitimate or illegal means and that concentrate upon various - and apparently rational - motivations to do crime. Some of these have been alluded to above where an offence and/or offender specific approach or appreciative perspective is evident. A fuller range and variety of property offences or 'economic' crimes, thefts and shoplifting, frauds, some drugs offences and prostitution could be explored in a similar way in order to assess motivations for doing crime. Although the crime as work perspective deserves harsh scrutiny from a feminist critique, and although this literature fails to be fully theorized, it is useful to explore some aspects of this perspective in more detail for its notions of the economic as money, the economic as employment and the economic as work, as well as for the research methodologies that are employed.

One of the distinctive features of the crime-as-work literature is that its subjects are sharply divided by social class. One category concentrates on working class criminals and street offences and the other addresses white-collar or occupational and business crimes. Those largely concerned with the former are writers such as Bennett and

Wright (1984), Gill (2000) Hobbs (1988, 1995), Maguire (1982), Matthews (2002), (Mawby (2001), Walsh (1986), who have written about criminal entrepreneurship, 'doing the business', criminal careers and dishonest work in burglary and robbery, often from the offender's perspective. All of these writers have specialized in working class, adult male criminals and their offending patterns. Walsh (1986) believes burglary alone is unsuitable as a way of making a living. In this sense, Walsh's burglars were not achieving a criminal career (Farrington 1994) through burglary alone. According to Walsh's findings, additional forms of income from social security, legitimate employment or other illegitimate sources are required to sustain a living. Walsh suggests burglary is a form of supplementary income and is part-time illegal work.

Prostitution is a classic example of an activity that blurs the boundaries between crime and work. As Bindman and Doezema have noted the term sex worker has been coined by sex workers themselves in a bid to redefine commercial sex as a form of employment for women and men and thus is generally preferred (Pitcher and Aris 2003). Prostitutes who work full-time can receive very high relative earnings. In 1997 the Guardian reported on an audit of prostitution in London. Street level prostitutes earning an average of £300 per week and private premise prostitution earning average weekly wages of £1,250 (Travis 1997). The same survey found that few did sex work every day but some admitted they could earn in the region of £100 per day (Matthews 1993).

Pressure groups in the United States such as COYOTE (Call off Your Old Tired Ethics), and in the UK, PROP (Preservation of the Rights of Prostitutes) and ECP

(English Collective of Prostitutes), campaign for the rights of prostitutes and for the decriminalisation of prostitution and for the limited legalisation of some varieties of sex work. Women doing business in the sex industry more recently include the 'female bratpack' who, having realised there is money in this business are taking control and turning pornography into retail therapy and making money out of it (Shakespeare 2002:1). Whilst Shakespeare suggests these are the female 'winners' in the sex industry, she identifies the losers as '*frightened and penniless children from eastern Europe* [*who*] *are trapped in prostitution in London* and *eastern European women who are lured to Britain with the promise of work as dancers, but who find life is very different when they arrive.*' Understanding female prostitutes as both winners and losers matches the two distinctive feminist positions on prostitution. The radical feminist perspective sees prostitution as a form of sexual slavery whilst liberal feminism sees it as a route for women to self-determination (Abraham and McNaught 1997).

Explanations of men's criminal activity have often sought to normalize, justify, understand and appreciate crime and offending as rationally motivated. However these explanations and motivations tend to be absent in popular press, media and political discourse and rhetoric where in contrast criminals are portrayed as different, abnormal, irrational and senseless. Whilst for men and boys criminology fully acknowledges the crime as work 'business perspective' and radical perspectives continue to berate official opinions and advise on crime and victimisation policies, these arguments are reserved for explaining the greed of men and boys not women and girls. In sum, only some examples of crime and offending patterns have been explored as work or as employment and where more appreciative perspectives have

been followed this has allowed multiple connections between crime and work to emerge. Nevertheless the gender bias and critique still generally apply and the literature discussed above is also problematic in that the view has been sustained that crime is men's work and not women's work (Jefferson 1993).

(iv) Crime, the Economy and Markets

The previous sections have explored some very specific connections between crime, criminality, crime in the workplace and crime as work and employment. Criminologically the associations between crime and the economic are dominant and enduring and clearly notions of the economic are closely associated with the work ethic, with business, and with rationalism. This section explores how crime, the economic and the economy in the twenty-first century are overwhelmingly market oriented.

For critical and left realist criminologists in particular the nature of contemporary market society is the key to understanding both conventional and white-collar crime. In simplified terms, '*markets are frameworks of commercial relationships and crime is one such relationship'* (Hughes with Langan, 2001:268). Market society is characterised by an individualism, a preoccupation with the pursuit of wealth and a '*culture of callousness'* (Currie, 1997) which Currie argues contributes to the growth of violent and other forms of crime. Taylor has similarly characterised market society as coupled with a 'discourse of choice' and a rise in self-interest (Taylor, 1999:63). Indeed one particular essay, 'Fraudsters and Villains: The Private Temptations of Market Society' (in Taylor, 1999), illustrates the sophistication of contemporary

criminological discourse about the economic. More generally, this text develops our appreciation of how crime must be understood as a struggle within particular conditions of existence. Thus, class is implicit and integral to the analysis. These conditions are examined at the level of the economic within the free market using criminological examples of crimes currently considered 'economic' such as drug use and frauds, including welfare fraud, and professional crimes. Taylor attempts to tackle both the macro- and micro-level of how the economic is fused with crime and criminality in market societies.

Ruggiero's (2000) essays on crime and markets also demonstrate that a sophisticated analysis of the economic is necessary and integral to a thorough understanding of how crime manifests and perpetuates itself in market societies. Ruggiero explicitly situates explanations and understanding of crime and social justice within the broader economic and political framework of a market society. Again, an analysis of power is implicit and integral. He also presents an informed understanding of economic categories in his analysis of several overlapping types of market (formal, informal, criminal and hidden). Analysis of crime within licit and illicit economies has been most explicitly developed and exemplified in relation to drugs markets (See for example Dorn and South, 1990; Dorn et al, 1992; Ruggiero and Vass, 1992; Ruggiero and South, 1995; South, 1997). This research has identified seven types of groups that are involved in drug trafficking and presents the drug economy as a mirror of the licit economy (Ruggiero, 2000: 22). There are blurred distinctions between employment and unemployment and between licit and illicit work in the marketplace or 'urban bazaar' (Ruggiero, 2000:30). Yet, as South acknowledges, women's position in the drug economy is rarely explored (South, 2002: 920).

Overall, the literature on crime and markets and the detailed contemporary research on crime and the drugs market provides significant insights into the operation of the informal and criminal economies, in particular the relationships and blurred boundaries between legitimate and illegitimate businesses (See also Hobbs, 1988; 1995; 1997, Findlay 1998, Fagan and Freeman 1999). Whilst the examination of the embeddedness of crime and markets is particularly sophisticated in respect of how the illegal drug economy operates, for feminist theoreticians there remain inherent problems. Women remain largely invisible. There are few examples or analysis of women doing crime either with or without men and gender is only partially explored through masculinity.

(v) Gendering the Economic and the Economy

The developments noted above expand our understanding of crime as a commercial relationship in the market place. However, this and the literature more generally on the criminal economy is disappointing from a feminist theoretical perspective. It is open to the earliest type of feminist critique that women are neglected, hidden and largely invisible. Where they do feature, they are presented as exceptions to the rule. Hobbs (1995) gives just one example of a female drug dealer.

> *Moira's entrance into crime was based upon the rational acknowledgement that an entrepreneurial opportunity was staring her in the face. The chance of making money from crime was apparent to her by the evident incompetence of her boyfriend. She sells dope.*
> (Hobbs, 1995: 23)

Hobbs only includes Moira because her boyfriend was a failure. Despite acknowledging Moira's rationalism, Hobbs chooses not to elaborate upon this salient point which could have been used to develop his scholarship around gender. In passing, Hobbs makes some additional interesting points about her use of gender and sexuality in her criminal business. Thus, any theoretical contributions made by Hobbs to the gendering of the economy are attributable to his work around boys 'doing the business'.

Ruggiero (2000: 44) offers in some detail, an interesting discussion of occupational barriers in illegal economies based on race and ethnicity but not gender. Women are briefly alluded to as victims of human trafficking (Ruggiero, 2000:95) and they are also briefly acknowledged as at the margins of the informal and criminal economies. In this respect women feature as ''grafters', an inexperienced army of users, a criminal reserve army' (Ruggiero, 2000: 21). Despite a lengthy section entitled 'Crises of Masculinity and the Gender Order', women's participation in crime as offenders is little referred to by Taylor (Taylor 1999a). Given Taylor's initial recognition of the gender order, together with the growing evidence that women are engaged in and are increasingly jailed for drug related offences (Carlen, 2002), it is disappointing that women feature in such a limited way in the remainder of his analysis of crime and markets.

Equally problematic, and perhaps due in no small part to the unawareness of gender, is the way in which notions of the economic and the economy find expression in the literature discussed above. Economic activities involve trading, buying and selling according to demand and supply mechanisms of the market and the market is an

environment or space defined according the same criteria. Despite detailed efforts to delineate 'the market' as something additional to a simple mechanism occupying a space where goods and services are traded, Taylor and Ruggiero nevertheless largely accept a traditional definition of the economic as narrowly defined by orthodox mainstream economists. Their work remains largely uncritical of this particular economic focus. Like more administrative criminology that explores the connections between crime and the economy generally (see Field 1990, Sutton 1998), they import this definition or conceptualisation of the market as given. Despite the macro and micro-level sophistication of contemporary analyses of crime as embedded in markets, even radical and critical criminologies and emergent discourse on crime and markets appear wedded to notions of the market-as-the-economic-as-business. For feminists this is problematic in several ways. A more fully gendered approach to the notion of the economic might prioritise quite different or at least more varied notions of the economic.

Economic crime

It is already evident that there are a number of ways in which the notion of 'economic crime' features in criminology. Most criminologists have a common sense understanding and appreciation of what such crimes are. We are likely to be influenced primarily by the criminological literature itself and also by official classifications and categorisations of crimes as provided by the Home Office. An extremely wide spectrum of thought exists around this notion and there are different levels in the debate about what constitutes 'economic crime'. The meaning of 'economic crime' is rarely made explicit and precise examples rarely given. It is more routine for us to make assumptions about what constitutes economic crime and this is

problematic. As part of this research and in order to further explore criminological understandings of economic crime I e-mailed a random selection of criminological researchers asking them to provide a brief description and provide some examples of 'economic crimes'. Together, the responses provide rich and detailed examples of economic crime. Quotation number one below best encapsulates the breadth, depth and variety of the descriptive examples provided:

Quotation 1

> *crime which wholly or partially is of economic benefit to the offender....where the acquisition of another's property provides proceeds that give the offender an economic advantage – e.g. burglary/robbery/theft where credit cards/cash stolen or goods which can be sold/exchanged to provide economic advantage....prostitution when committed as a means of providing for an individual's needs e.g. living costs, drug use...white collar crime would be another...may also include wider examples within the corporate setting which effectively provides an economic benefit to the transgressor – emptying the oil tanks of vessels at sea .....the exploitation of workers re poor working/safety conditions*

Three categories of economic crime emerge. The first is a generic category indicated by the variety of language often used as synonymous with 'economic crime' within the criminological literature. Hence the phrases 'acquisitive crime', 'crime for economic 'gain'/ 'advantage'/ 'benefit'/ 'to make money', 'financial crime', 'property crime', 'instrumental crime', 'enterprise crime' and crime for 'need'/ 'greed' /'gain'.

These generalised references and distinctions often over-simplify broad and diverse forms of offending and offending patterns and condense them into a generic category 'economic crime'. The tendency is to assume crime for gain is primarily property crime as opposed to crime not for gain as assault and sexual offences (Field, 1990). This is common and such generalisations are frequently encountered in popular criminology textbooks. This approach simply attempts to distinguish one broad category from another equally broad category of offences. This was a typical feature of the respondents' ways of describing economic crime.

A second category of economic crimes draws attention to either the offence as economic or the offender as either an individual or an institution, acting in pursuit of illegal economic advantage. Although there are many detailed examples of white-collar, corporate, organised and professional, occupational and other 'economic crimes', corporate, organised and professional categories were never actually named by the survey respondents. Also, very few of the respondents mentioned specific authors in order to describe and exemplify 'economic crime', although as noted earlier there is a strong tradition for authors to specialise in areas linked to those broad crime categories noted as synonymous with economic crime above. Quotation two below demonstrates a common tendency to think about white-collar and corporate crime in terms of disasters, memorable headline events, scandals or sleaze as exposed by a handful of criminological scholars. Case study, whistle-blowing or exposure techniques tend to reveal otherwise hidden or invisible crimes corporate crimes in this way and Steven Box (1981, 1983, 1987) is perhaps the most notable author here. Braithwaite (1984), Pearce and Tombs (1989, 1993), Punch (1996) Tombs (1999, 2000) and Slapper and Tombs (1999) continue this focus. Economic crime emerges as

the common theme to all of this work where risks, malpractices, deceptions, and illegal practices to maximise profit margins are exposed in the corporate workplace. Quotations one above and two below clearly illuminate these varieties of economic crimes.

Quotation 2

> Fraud committed by those working for businesses against other businesses e.g. illegal share dealing; Fraud committed by businesses against the public, e.g. the Robert Maxwell pension fraud.... Crime committed by businesses to increase profits which results in members of the public being injured or killed, e.g. the Bhopal disaster in India in 1984; the Ford Pinto scandal of the 1960's in USA....almost any example of negligence by profit-making organisations that results in death or injury, e.g. Railtrack disasters...

The scholarship referred to above has concentrated on the workplace as an arena for a whole variety of different examples of 'crimes' with a financial motive and has explored crimes that are connected to financial business environments. Crime at work can cover a whole array of economic crimes sometimes for the profit or the benefit of the employer (frauds, corporate and organisational crimes), other times for the benefit of the employee (occupational crimes, frauds, fiddles, pilfering). In an apparently unquantifiable number of cases collusion occurs between employers and employees (as illustrated in the work of Mars, 1994 and Bamfield, 1998) or between employees and third parties (in the case of retail theft for example between employees and customers). In each instance the incentive is assumed to be economic and the aim is

pecuniary reward and profit maximisation as exposed in the pharmaceutical industry by both Box (1992) and Braithwaite (1984).

In 1905 Bonger included fraudulent crimes, bankruptcy and prostitution in the grouping 'economic crimes'. In 1949 Sutherland famously brought white-collar crime into criminological literature, thus problematising the notion of economic crimes belonging solely to the powerless. White-collar economic crimes and the economic 'crimes of the powerful', were further explored by Pearce (1976) in the 1970's whilst financial and economic frauds since the 1980's have been explored by Levi (Levi, 1981). During the same time period and as noted earlier, Hobbs (1988, 1995, 1997) has pioneered the investigation of organised economic crimes and professional crime networks in the UK.

There is clear evidence from these sources that criminology acknowledges economic crime as non-class specific. Yet, women and girls as offenders feature little, neither are they adequately exposed as victims of economic crimes (Szockyi and Fox 1996, Davies forthcoming). The increasingly developed theorising around only one dimension of power has rendered the salience of gender unremarked upon.

The survey revealed one further way of illustrating economic crime is through focussing attention on the victims of crime. Croall lists varieties and types of occupational, computer, corporate/organisational (including crimes against consumers, health and safety offences and environmental offences), financial frauds and corruption (Croall, 1998). She also illustrates the impact of white-collar/business crime in selected settings (Croall in Davies et al,1999). Coleman (1995) engages in a

similar exercise in the context of the United States noting occupational and organisational crimes, their common sub-types and their social impact. The social impact clearly refers to the damage and harm caused in financial and economic terms[4] (Sheley, 1995). These and similar mini-case study type methods of illustrating and exposing hidden white-collar and corporate crime has become a regular feature in popular criminology textbooks (see for example Langan in Muncie and McLoughlin 1996, Hughes with Langan in Muncie and McLoughlin 2001) aimed at improving our appreciation and understanding of the nature, extent and seriousness of such crimes and victimisations and helps us to imagine and speculate about the gendered nature of their impact which few have empirically researched.

At one level economic crime appears to have some commonality of meaning in criminology. From the survey, those crimes most frequently mentioned are fraud and theft (including shoplifting, benefit and credit card frauds) as well as white-collar and corporate crimes, definitions of which are notoriously difficult to pin down in the criminological literature. Prostitution also features. The vocabularies used here include official crime categories, social harm, as well as colloquial and unofficial terms for explaining deviant and criminal activities. Examples of the latter reflect the alternative language of perks, scams, pilfering and fiddly work found within the work of Ditton (1977), Mars (1974, 1994, 2001), and MacDonald (1994). However, in their attempt to describe and give examples, respondents refer to a more complex aspect of

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[4] Examples of the financial and economic impact include the following:
Employee theft: may add 2-4 percent to the cost of typical retail merchandise
Embezzlement: Individual crimes may run into hundreds of millions of dollars;
Crimes in the professions: Over 10,000 lives and tens of billions of dollars lost per year
Bribery and corruption: Annual cost is $3-£15 billion, but worst impact is the subversion of democratic government
Fraud and deception: Yearly losses in the hundreds of billions, loss of confidence in business and tax system
Antitrust violations: Probably the most costly of all white collar crimes – over $350 billion per year

economic crimes and that is 'economic criminality'. Economic criminality has already featured in this review and it merits much further discussion both here and in subsequent chapters.

Economic criminality

Explaining crime by reference to economic motivations and economic criminality is a strong theme in criminological theorising. Indeed, it is a foundational assumption within critical criminology that human beings have choices but not in conditions of their own choosing and that any crimes they might commit are inextricably bound up with 'the economic'. This was noted in the early work of Merton (1938, 1968) who suggests that the crimes of fraud, employee theft, gambling, prostitution, burglary and robbery tend to be carried out by 'innovators'. This category of offender, unable to acquire wealth by institutionalised or legitimate means, devises alternative ways by which wealth can be acquired (Merton, 1938; Cloward and Ohlin, 1960). Thus 'innovators' are using such crimes as *economic* crimes. The strong left realist tradition within criminology similarly argues that the effects of economic marginalisation can combine with political disaffection and engender anti-social behaviour. Such theorising suggests that crime thrives where the expectations of material rewards are not equally available to all sections of society and hence is greatly influenced by the Mertonian tradition and strain theory. Thus, 'economic criminality' becomes conflated with and inextricable from 'economic crimes'.

Quotation three illustrates this effectively:

Quotation 3

crimes committed as a consequence of economic circumstances and resources....sex, fraud and shoplifting....The motive is economic survival and the means are related to opportunity and resources. Women can sell their bodies.....their fraud is often related to working while on benefits or use of stolen credit cards.....In short people who are not necessarily committed to dishonesty or a criminal career commit 'economic crimes' to supply the things that they need but cannot afford...crimes...become economic because of the economic circumstances and (lack of) criminal resourcefulness of the perpetrators.

Specific examples of 'economic crime' are used alongside particular explanations for the activity or crime. Thus '*crimes...become economic because of the economic circumstances* '. The reasons why material possessions are stolen, thieved, burgled etc. are explained by need, necessity and/or greed. We can recognise these explanations of criminality as core to theoretical criminology, especially critical, left realist, cultural and post modern criminological enterprises.

A critical review of how economic crime and some key aspects of economic criminality have been variously defined and explored confirms that gender has for the most part been ignored or at best relegated rather than prioritised as a salient feature for the understanding and appreciation of how and why such crimes are done. How women might contribute as perpetrators of economic crime remains under explored. Quotation three above neatly summarises how women and girls are represented within the context of economic '*Women can sell their bodies.....their fraud is often related to*

working while on benefits or use of stolen credit cards'. Such statements and assumptions are generally statistically evidenced yet criminologically they are unevenly researched. Only as street level prostitutes do women appear to feature in any substantial collection of academic literature and with few exceptions (see for example McLead 1982, Matthews and O'Neil 2003, Phoenix 1999, Scrambler and Scrambler 1997) the debates fail to focus on women's motivations.

This review brings us only slightly closer to a clear and useful definition of what constitutes 'economic crimes' and what particular crimes for economic gain might be included in this generic category. At best the above leads to a definition of economic crimes that includes most varieties of property crimes, in particular thefts such as shoplifting and pilfering, frauds and forgery, burglary, robbery, some forms of car and drug related offences as well as prostitution and other crimes that come under the general heading of white-collar crimes. These examples can clearly be labelled as acquisitive crimes or 'instrumental' crimes as opposed to crimes that might be committed due to reasons of boredom and to some extent excitement although these too are not necessarily mutually exclusive explanations and motivations. Criminology has a strong tradition of being sensitive to 'the economic' as identified in the argument above on economic criminality. Nevertheless having drawn attention to the problems related to women, crime, criminality and the notion of the economic and rationalism, need versus greed, the gender patterning of crime, work, the economy and markets, further questions have been raised. Not only is there a gender gap and scope for theory testing and generalisation across the gender divide, but also there are more significant and fundamental questions to be confronted concerning women and the whole notion of the economic.

Is Economic crime a Man's Game?

If finding a common and consistent definition or classification of 'economic crimes' is difficult, finding a definition or classification of 'economic crimes' as they apply to female offenders is doubly problematic. Attempts to elaborate upon what might properly constitute economic crimes, as reviewed above, are inherently problematic in themselves and unsurprisingly but still disappointingly they are flawed from a feminist perspective. Two fundamental problems are evident.

First, women as victims remain largely invisible in dominant definitions/classifications of white-collar (Croall, 2001), corporate (Snider, 1996) and other (Gelsthorpe and Morris, 1988) varieties of economic crimes, thereby obscuring the gendered nature of these forms of (economic) victimisation. Women as victims of certain corporate and business crimes remain doubly susceptible to invisibility. Crimes and criminality remain the primary concern of mainstream criminology and victims tend to be identified only as a result of crimes being proven and perpetrators being caught (Mawby and Walklate, 1994, Davies et al, 1996). Victim accreditation and status depends upon this process being completed and until then sufferers remain alleged victims. Economic corporate and business crimes tend to be in the main invisible, under-policed, under-controlled and the offenders under-prosecuted and under-punished at least in the public domain. If such harmful and criminal economic activities and practices are invisible so too are the women victims of such activities, behaviours and crimes. Women are emerging as the victims of pharmaceutical companies, the fashion and beauty industry. In effect women are victims of what Hall (1997) describes as the globalising neo-capitalist market place, based on circulation,

consumption and social administration; they are victims of a consumer society. Women and their children have been victimised suffering personal abuses including the deforming of their bodies. It is rare that this is documented (Davies forthcoming) but one collection of articles edited by Elizabeth Szockji and James Fox entitled Corporate Victimisation of Women (1996) focuses on such issues. In that volume Loreen Snider discusses the gender-blindness of the corporate crime literature more generally. Despite the gender-neutral character of the term economic crime, women are often disproportionately the victims of the less visible yet very physically, emotionally and financially harmful forms of economic victimisation. Moreover, the impact of such forms of victimisation and the recovery period is likely to be greater for these female victims. Gender-free and gender-neutral terms have been accepted, blinding our vision and rendering the gender patterning of victimisation invisible.

The second fundamental problem with existing definitions and classifications of economic crimes concerns women as offenders. The gender patterning of crime suggests that women do engage as offenders in categories of crime that might warrant the label economic crime. Examples using official classifications would include specific types of theft such as theft from shops (Home Office classification Number 46). Handling of Stolen Goods (HO No 54) as well as other (welfare) frauds (HO No 53) and forgeries (HO No 60) also feature. Additionally some drugs and prostitution related offences can be noted and women also engage in some categories of white-collar crime. It appears that women at least to some degree 'do' economic crimes.

The issue becomes more complex when the associated notion of economic criminality is examined for here there is a lack of explanation of women's crime for economic

gain in economic terms. If women are doing crimes that are definable as economic or are economic in nature, they might also be doing crimes for economic gain. Whereas men and boys do economic crimes for economic gain/advantage/benefit, to make money, women do economic crime because they are mad, bad or whores. As Dorie Klein first pointed out along with Kress in 1976:

> [M]*any explanations of what are obviously economically motivated offences, such as prostitution and shoplifting, are explained in sexual terms such as prostitution being promiscuity, and shoplifting being 'kleptomania' caused by women's inexplicable mental cycles tied to menstruation (Klein in Muncie et al, 2000:162)*

As Klein and Kress observed (1976:155), women offenders have rarely been seen as either rational or wilful. In a later review Klein again makes reference, in her critique of authors who contribute to the 'legacy of sexism', to the way in which boys are 'instrumental' whilst girls are 'expressive' and that even 'Economic offences such as shoplifting are explained as outlets for sexual frustration' (1996). Indeed, where shoplifting continues to be the focal point for research, criminological interest continues to be minimal. Although recent literature admits to economic motivations being particularly influential in explaining adults who shoplift, forensic and psychiatric research has preferred to concentrate on 'irrational' motivations and notions surrounding addiction. (See for e.g. McGuire 1997). Additionally, popular and media portrayals of shoplifting readily associates this form of theft with women, kleptomania, depression and anxiety, eating disorders such as bulimia or anorexia nervosa and psychological and mental disorders (see for e.g. The Guardian 21.7.03),

with apparent total abandonment of the immediate or broader economic context. In contrast male offenders, in addition to being lead astray, being sick or evil, have also been viewed as rational choosers (Merton, 1938; Cohen, 1955).

Whilst the feminist critique of the explanations for female crime referred to by Klein in 1976 is now well established, even according to the most developed feminist theorising women overwhelmingly appear to do crime (economic crime, in particular shoplifting and prostitution) because they are victims in and of society, they are pushed and driven into crime to escape from poverty, abuse and hardship. Thus feminist theory does argue that women do crime for economic gain and feminist criminology can point to a gender patterning of the economic crimes women do. However, whilst the feminist influence on theories of female crime since Klein and Kress first observed '*obviously economically motivated offences, such as prostitution and shoplifting*,' has been significant, their criticism that instrumental rationality may not be an entirely male preserve has been overlooked.

Explanations for men and boys' economic criminal activities have moved on from mad and bad type explanations and since the feminist critique, explanations for women and girls' activities have moved on also. However, in terms of criminological theorising this has lead to an accepted wisdom that men and boys' economic crimes are always done purposefully, instrumentally and rationally for selfish reasons due to greed and for financial and material gain. In essence men and boys are rational (Davies, 1999). Women and girls' economic crimes remain insufficiently explored in this way. Few feminist authors or theorists of female crime have explicitly taken up the theme that some forms of female offending might be done more purposefully and

wilfully than is generally acknowledged. The attraction of money and economic reward might be more carefully considered as a 'pull factor', an additional or enticing pathway into crime for women.

According to dominant and traditional criminological discourse women's crimes are not done in economy terms as these are generally defined within malestream criminology. In effect, economic criminality presents itself as gender-specific. Economic crime has a close affinity with economic criminality and economic criminality is a male preserve, men and boys are seen and understood to do it. Perhaps, and partly as a consequence of this, clear and consistent definitions and classifications of economic crimes and economic criminality as applied to women and female offenders are not apparent. Some activities in which women engage might properly constitute economic crimes save they fail to be labelled either economic or criminal. Using official classifications to determine the economic crimes of women therefore leads to an impoverished list of examples. Notions of economic criminality and crime for economic gain are riddled with gender-based assumptions and a hegemonic masculinity where male offenders comprise the subject matter. A feminist critique points to the insufficiently and inappropriately gendered definitions and classifications of economic crime and economic criminality.

Feminist Analysis of Economic Crime

As I have mentioned briefly in Chapter One, the feminist critique of criminology commenced in the 1970's (See Klein and Kress 1976, Smart, 1976). This pioneering feminist work gave way to a consolidation period (Heidensohn, 1994) in the following decade when feminist work of an empirical nature flourished. Feminist

theorising has since continued to ensure that specific attention has in some quarters at least, been given to women as both victims and offenders.

One interpretation of *'obviously economically motivated offences,'* (Klein and Kress 1976:155) is that such offences are committed by women and girls for reasons concerning lack of money, economic marginalisation and outright poverty. These connections were thoroughly examined from the early 1980's, in the UK particularly by Pat Carlen. In the late 1980's the types of crimes that Carlen's (1988) criminal women predominantly participated in were shoplifting, fraud and forgery offences, and sexual services. A decade later she and others acknowledge that the final stages of individual pathways to women's prisons manifest a greater involvement with drugs than they did earlier in the twentieth century (Campbell et al 2001, Carlen, 1998, Carlen 2002, Lowthian 2002).

Both Cook (1987, 1989, 1997) and Daly (1994) have similarly explored crimes of poverty and inequality as committed by female offenders. Whilst Daly has focussed on crimes of robbery, larceny, interpersonal violence and drug offences, Cook has drawn attention to women's involvement in benefit frauds and fiddling welfare claims as a response to living in poverty. The 'feminisation of poverty' is now a well-rehearsed thesis and developments around this theme now suggest various provisioning reasons are orthodox for women's doing of property crimes and thefts in particular but also more recently in drugs and violent offences (Campbell et al 2001). Weisburd et al (2001), exploring the criminal careers of white-collar offenders, follow a similar line of argument that women offenders are motivated by personal problems and family based needs (Croall, 2001). Weisburd et al (2001) demonstrate that women

with few substantial assets are likely to feature at the lower end of the spectrum of white-collar crime as credit card fraudsters, false claims and mail order offenders. Croall (2001), Levi (1995) and Weisburd et al (2001) concur: women's involvement in white-collar crime parallels their employment status. It is women's structural position that accounts for gender differences in white-collar crime.

Others have explored specific offence categories such as prostitution in the context of women's poverty. McLeod (1982) quotes a prostitute who 'did it for the money' and more recently Phoenix (1999) has drawn attention to women's perceptions that money obtained from prostitution is 'easy money'. Maher (1997) provides a rare detailed account of the economic lives of women drug users in the US. She illustrates how sex-work takes place against the backdrop of the street-level drug economy. Miller has similarly written about girls' involvement in street-level drug sales (2001) as well as the motivations to commit robbery (Miller, 1998). This study of both male and female robbers found similar articulations and explanations for the primary motivation for robbery by both males and females: to get money or material goods. Similar work has recently taken place in Edinburgh where girls' discourses for explaining their participation in violent activities have been researched (Batchelor 2001; Burman, 2003) and others too have recently challenged traditional constructions of violent girls (Worrall 2001, 2004).

There is then substantial scope to develop feminist critiques and feminist theorising in respect of women and economic crime. There are ample grounds for questioning whether economic crime is a man's game. Another interpretation of '*obviously economically motivated offences, such as prostitution and shoplifting*' (Klein and

Kress 1976: 155) is that such offences are committed by women and girls for reasons due to greed. In the 1980's Carlen made occasional reference to the possibility that women offenders are acting rationally. Where her argument is more fully developed she concentrates on rationality born out of a need to escape from economic dependency and economic hardship, not a form of rationality born out of a vision of prosperity or the attraction and pull of material possessions. Yet, one of Carlen's most renowned co-authors of *Criminal Women*, Jenny Hicks describes how she established her own criminal firm, defrauded a post office out of a quarter of a million pounds and used the profits from this to finance a lifestyle which included drugs (Hicks, in Carlen et al. 1985). Similarly, Chris Tchaikovsky claimed, 'my criminality was the result of a rational choice - nobody had coerced or cajoled me into it' (Tchaikovsky, in Carlen at al. 1985: 56). A point not yet fully taken up by feminist theory is – as Carlen (1985,1992) first remarked almost two decades ago - that women can commit crime for very much the same reasons as men, including material gain not always related to poverty. Escaping from poverty and abuse is not a generic and comprehensive explanation for women's involvement in crime and Carlen acknowledges that women can commit crime for very much the same reasons as men. The changing nature of female offending that shows increasing connections between crime and drugs also demands our re-analysis of women's motivations to do crime.

Ultimately, women's agency in the commission of crime and very specifically women's self-assessed motivations remain under-explored. The tendency to dichotomise women's motivations requires particular redress. In respect of explaining patterns of female offending, women tend to be portrayed, particularly in literature from the US, as either 'passive victims' or 'gangsta bitches' (Maher, 1997). Linked to this but arising more directly from the particular review of literature above, specific

questions emerge in relation to gender patterning of crime, understanding women's crime and in particular appreciating women's crime for economic gain. For example to what extent are women motivated to do different types of crimes more for greed than need (Davies and Jupp, 1999, Croall, 2001, Davies 2003)?

Most female crime, according to any measure of female offending, is property crime (Shoplifting and thefts including cheque and credit card frauds and forgery), but also involves prostitution and drug offences; it is crime for economic gain. Despite this, instrumental/economic rationality, the dominant way of accounting for property crime generally, is the one explanation seldom offered when women's offending is being considered. Carlen and Daly's references to rationality are implicit rather than explicit. Whilst feminist criminology currently falls far short of fully exploring this theme, scholars acknowledge that for some women who commit property crimes a different explanation may be appropriate. Some forms of offending by women might be more purposefully rational than has hitherto been thought. Economic gain, the attraction of money and economic reward, as a pull factor could be a further 'pathway' into crime for some women. Additional and/or alternative economic explanations may help deepen our understanding of some of the crimes women most frequently do.

Recent American writers on female criminals have focussed upon girl's involvement in violent crimes including girl gangs and street robbery (Campbell 1984, 1990, 1991; Hagedorn, 1988; Chesney-Lind and Hagedorn, 1999; Hunt et al, 2000, 2002; Joe-Laidler and Hunt, 2001; Messerschmidt, 1997; Miller 1998, 2001; Moore, 1991). Miller's work begins to explore gender and the accomplishment of street robbery and

the contention that women are pulled toward violent street crime by the same forces that affect their male counterparts (Miller, 1998: 41). Women as perpetrators of crime figure significantly in Maher's (1997) research. This empirically and theoretically challenges the extreme readings of women's involvement in crime, that is, where women are either cast as passive, submissive objects or rational volitional agents,' 'gangsta bitches' and 'corporate criminals'. In the UK too there are exceptional examples, including Avril Taylor's work on women drug users (Taylor 1993). Thus, there are examples of recent scholarly activity testing out old and developing new theoretical constructs and applications in several areas of female crime. These newly emerging ideas on women, crime, rationality and volition require much more widespread and detailed examination in the contexts of violent crime, street robbery, prostitution and drugs in line with recent work noted above, but also in other areas of criminal activity, in the more regular and routine aspects of the gender patterning of crime, that is in the more mundane economic crimes of women such as thefts including shoplifting, frauds and forgeries.

(vi) Women, Crime and Rationalism

This review and critique argues that in general feminist criminology presents criminal women for the most part as neglected. Where women and girls as offenders were considered they were biologised, sexualised or demonised and psychiatrised (Allen 1987, Cain 1989, Carlen 1985, Heidensohn 1994). Traditional explanations rarely included instrumental economic rationality as a motivating factor for women. Criminality is '*assumed to be a masculine attribute and women criminals are therefore perceived to be either 'not women' or 'not criminals*' (Worrall 1990:31).

This legacy of sexism can be traced throughout the twentieth century and to a great extent criminology generally continues to perpetuate dualistic categorisations and criminality and the doing of crime corresponds to specific notions of sex/gender. When female criminals are alluded to, explanations and motivations for action predominate which are rooted in essentialism and biologism. The possibility that women offend rationally and purposefully is ruled out.

More recently, following in the wake of the feminist critique, feminist scholarship has viewed criminal women as being pushed towards criminal activities. Criminal women are explained as vulnerable and as being propelled due to economic marginalisation and poverty into crime and offending. We are also persuaded that women generally follow one of three main pathways into crime. Women enter crime as street women, as harmed, battered and harming women, or as drug-connected women (see Daly 1993). Women as criminals thus tend to emerge in theoretical accounts as passive actors rather than strategising resisters and the possibility that women offend rationally and purposefully still tends to be ruled out.

My proposition is that there is space for another pathway into crime for women, a pathway more of their own selection and choosing. Women following this route enter crime as criminals, as active decision-makers, more in charge of their own destiny and more rational and calculating in their choice of criminal activities. For some women crime might be an attractive economic proposition a compelling, alluring attraction that holds out the prospect of a less thrifty and meagre lifestyle, a lifestyle that looks more lucrative and successful. In this view, crime is a prospective solution and ambition, a pathway and alternative way of achieving a different lifestyle. This

represents a different starting point for understanding female offenders and for appreciating the types of crimes they regularly and routinely do. This alternative or additional perspective on women who do crime for economic gain where women are assigned offender status rather than excused from it, requires a brief examination and critique of the rational choice perspective in criminology and perhaps will later require a much fuller critique of the notion of rationality more generally.

I now consider the generalisability of the rational choice perspective. This is arguably the most recognisable, lasting and influential perspective in respect of crime and social disorder policies and politics in recent decades. It is here that the notion of the economic has had its greatest impact upon populist and administrative versions of criminology. It would seem necessary, for example, to consider the question of whether or not rational choice and instrumental/economic rationality are as suitable explanations of women's experiences and motivations to do economic crime as they would appear to be for men. Can we generalise this mainstream explanation of rational choice theory to explain some of the criminal activities that women engage in? Despite the enormous investment within criminology and criminal justice policy-making in the Rational Choice perspective since the 1980s, it could be argued that its full and proper utility has still to be examined in relation to women as offenders. The following part of the review shows how the rational choice perspective can be readily dismissed as a potentially useful hypothesis or testing ground from which to develop my investigations of women's motives for doing crime for economic gain. Similarly, although it is instructive to review it for the points it raises about the gendered nature of rationalism, the choice theoretic more generally is briefly explored.

Rational choice is a perspective that became significant within criminology during the 1980's and had growing resonance in the 1990's. The ways in which rational choice has been articulated and developed within criminology signifies the more general manner in which the notion of the 'economic' has been popularly incorporated into criminology. What then are the rudiments of the Rational Choice perspective?

Rational choice theory derives from the tradition of the classical school and the key premise is that most criminals are reasoning people; their mode of reasoning is logical. Rational thinking involves understanding distinctions between ends and means and then making choices. Rational choice theory explains what we ought to do in order to achieve our aims as closely as possible (Elster 1994). Criminologically the rational choice perspective generally focuses upon both the opportunities to commit crimes and offenders' choice to commit them. The 'choice' that offenders make is deemed rational in that the offender engages in a form of cost-benefit analysis. This type of analysis is therefore essentially an economic one. It entails calculating and weighing up the risks of detection, capture and punishment on the one hand, against the material rewards, benefits and satisfactions to be reaped from seizing the opportunity to commit the crime on the other. In this way, the offender is always assumed to be acting rationally, seeking to benefit themselves by their criminal behaviour.

It is widely acknowledged that the spur to the contemporary incarnations of classicist ideas in criminology derives from the work of Cornish and Clarke in 1986. These authors and editors provide the most developed explanation for the viability of this perspective. Their version of the rational choice perspective suggests that offenders

act '*in terms of a limited or bounded rationality*' (Hopkins-Burke, 2001:44), where offenders choosing to commit crime are acting at least semi-rationally. This perspective attempts to explain offender motivation to crime as an attempt to meet the offender's needs. Such rationality is a decision-making process of weighing up the opportunities for meeting those needs against the potential costs of action and the anticipated benefits. Simply put, the offender chooses whether to commit a crime or not having weighed up the chances of success. If the belief is that the chances of success are greater than the chances of failure then the crime will be committed. If offenders are choosing to commit crime then they are acting rationally.

The rational choice model has been applied to a range of different offences in the search for situational crime prevention measures. In the 1980's research addressed offender's motivations and the costs and benefits of robbery (Walsh, 1986), and shoplifting (Carroll and Weaver in Cornish and Clarke, 1986). Burglary (Bennett and Wright, 1984) and opioid addiction (Bennett, 1986) were also amongst the particular offences examined. This early phase of application clearly saw the rational choice model as more applicable to crime for gain or property crimes than to 'expressive crime' due to the potential for property crime to become a way of making a living and a way of life. Variant strains of the rational choice model have become somewhat less economically determined and routine activities theory for instance, claims to apply to both personal and property crimes. Thus in the 1990's, routine activity theory, pioneered by Felson (1994), expresses concerns about the press of circumstances shaping individual acts (rational choice) (Pease in McLoughlin and Muncie, 2000). Both of these perspectives – rational choice and routine activity – have inspired strategies for crime control, in particular situational crime prevention research and

policies. Indeed, the brand of criminology that has been most widely embraced in Home Office and policy-making circles in the last decade of the twentieth century has been that associated with the perspectives (rational choice and routine activity) and crime control strategies (situational crime prevention) derived from a fundamentally classicist view of human nature wherein offenders are free, rational decision-makers making choices. In this respect, the legacy and influence of 'economic rationality' in general endures. Despite ongoing critiques of rational choice perspectives in their crude and more refined representations, they continue to exert considerable impact upon criminological debates as well as influence on public policy.

There are several problems with this wholesale adoption of the rational choice model and the rational actor. The model incorporated within criminology is little changed from that originating within the mainstream of the discipline of economics. There are widespread criticisms of the core analytical assumptions of rational choice perspectives, namely its primary focus on the individual and individual responsibility as well as its assumptions about choice. Wider forces and issues that might influence decisions such as morality, conformity, social organisation and inequality including race, ethnicity, gender and class tend to be largely ignored. According to rational choice perspectives it is not necessary to consider prior causes, antecedents and structures. In effect, as Taylor puts it, individuals are viewed as 'identical ''calculators'' (Taylor, 1999a). Thus, as Taylor indicates, amongst other aspects of the general critique, the gender critique can be applied. Illustrative of this is that despite an empirical study of shoplifting being included within Cornish and Clarke's (1986) edited collection, Carroll and Weaver's contribution on shoplifting where verbal protocol procedure is used to find out what criminals 'really' think about when

they are considering actual crime opportunities, a gendered appreciation is not evident. Gender differences/similarities are not discussed in any depth although it is apparent that the data could have been further exploited on this subject.

This method of incorporating the economic within criminology demonstrates clearly the 'pervasiveness of hegemonic masculinity' (Scraton 1990) within the discipline of criminology (Walklate 1995:29). It is not a gendered theory of crime and as such it requires more fundamental questioning generally and from a feminist perspective in particular. Adopting the rational choice model of economic activity is selecting a particular and inappropriate type of economic analysis, that is orthodox economics as the rational choice theoretic. Such a selective and unitary model, that excludes whole areas of legitimate economic activity that are important for women in particular (e.g. homeworking, domestic labour, child care, unpaid work etc) leads to partial understanding of what social (economic) life is really about for women. Similarly, if legitimate economic activities are excluded, so too are the more obscured forms of illegitimate and unofficial or extra-legal activities that both men and women engage in. Whilst the rational choice perspective could be further developed in respect of specific offences such as shoplifting, it is likely that the perspective is similarly insensitive to understanding other 'crimes' or activities done for economic gain women do. Thus, at best, rational choice appears to represent a concept and form of rationality that might be peculiar to masculinity, where rationality is an entrenched male attribute. At worst, it might construct a masculinity and individualism which has no real relationship to human behaviour. The utility of the rational choice perspective for better appreciating and understanding women's experiences and motivations for doing crime for economic gain is likely to be negligible.

The tendency for economists, econometric, rational choice, decision-making and choice theoretical theorising is to emphasise the value of time in financial or cost benefit type analyses and to emphasise the notion of the economic as income generation. Such perspectives potentially underestimate or ignore other social influences and rewards, whether these are the attractive features intrinsic to illegal work that pull people into crime or other features that tend to propel individuals or push disadvantaged and marginalised groups into crime, or whether people are differently acted upon and acting, and do crime due to a complex combination of influences and motivations. This critique is applicable to men and boys but it is more immediately obvious in respect of women who do shoplifting and prostitution and therefore such perspectives are less and less convincing or appropriate for investigating women's experiences and motivations for doing crime for economic gain. They follow traditionally masculinist vocabularies of motives for criminality and remain fundamentally tied to the economic as-business-as-money-as profit. They are gender-specific, neglect women, femininity and motherhood and the significance of familial relations and women's conceptualisations of social life.

Where feminist criminologists have addressed rationality they have done so only partially. Adler (1975a, 1975b) and Simon (1975) touched tangentially upon women's rationality. They envisaged women's criminality would increase rapidly and that women criminals would become either more violent - like men - or become involved in a wider variety of criminality through assuming traditional male social roles. In this way, like men, women would begin to assert themselves; in typically male ways they would become 'aggressive, pushy, hard-headed' (Simon and Landis 1991:2). This is a

classic female liberation causes crime argument. In these views, this was the logical and rational end product of the increased emancipation of women. Adler and Simon's theses has been severely criticised and was virtually dismissed in the late 1970's – 1980's. However, this perspective has some empirical support in the light of women's apparently increased rates of participation in violent and drug-related crimes. Other feminist scholars continue to dismiss the thesis on the grounds that it is too simplistic and smacks of liberal feminism, leaving unchallenged what the yardsticks of our understanding might be (Gelsthorpe 1989, Walklate 2001).

In the early 1980's Steffensmeier broached the question of rationality, but through a gendered lens. He looked at an organizations criminal enterprise in the context of '*sex-segregation in the underworld'* and suggested, '*rationality refers to the link of means to ends or the extent to which expeditious means are used to achieve goals'* (Steffensmeier, 1983:1025). Such approaches are rare and could be more developed. Gender sensitive approaches could combine with gender specific appreciations to bring about greater understanding of the gender patterning of crime and criminality. For example, two authors writing about women sex workers have advocated a '*presumption of wilful rationality'* (Scrambler and Scrambler 1997: xv) to capture the idea that the background of prostitutes cannot be denied as important when considering recruitment into the sex industry but the idea of free and informed choice might be important too. Such an approach recognises 'doing crime' is one's own free will and choice (wilful). However, at the same time it can be regarded as exercising one's reason (rationality). The notion of 'wilful rationality' might be appropriate for considering other forms of crime for gain that women 'do'.

Thus in addition to the gaps and theoretically under-developed areas identified earlier, together with minor threads of evidence from feminist criminological analysis, there are indications from the work of Klein and Kress in the 1979's Carlen's work from the 1980's to date and also from Steffensmeier (1983), Maher (1997), Miller (1998) and Scrambler and Scrambler (1997) that suggest additional motivations for women's crime and criminality might be explored; that the notion of women's doing of economic crime in particular for reasons due to need and or greed might be re-visited.

Crime, Gender, Dualisms and Difference

The foregoing begins to consider some different meanings of rationality from a gendered perspective. The positioning of women in relation to most interpretations of rationality is problematic. The various meanings, explicit and implicit assumptions associated with rationality do not amount to a description of what is traditionally seen as feminine. In this way criminological explanations for crime and offending adhere to dualistic modes of reasoning and dualistic associations. Feminist commentators have variously pointed out and exemplified common 'dualisms' and links between thinking about science and thinking about gender (see for example Folbre 2001, Fox Keller 1985, Gilligan 1982, Harding 1987, Jennings 1993, Mellor 1992, 1997, Miller 2002, Walklate 2001). The separate spheres doctrine typically refers to distinctions or differences, contrasts, dichotomies or oppositional categories and divisions, things that are separated by boundaries and fences, thresholds and divides and which tend to correspond with normative expectations associated with masculinities and femininities (Some general aspects of the separate spheres doctrine and common dichotomies are illustrated in Appendix 1 Common Dichotomies). In terms of explaining women's crime and offending, they are often viewed as stepping outside of

their appropriate sex/gender roles so that women as offenders are considered not to be acting according to their own free will – they are biologically driven or they are mad. In terms of traditional criminological explanations, they are seen to lose their femininity, even emasculated. Assessments of women as offenders have refused to see criminal women operating as rational actors or choosers in the same way as assessments of men as offenders see them as the criminal equivalent of 'Economic Business Man'.

The Rational Choice perspective within mainstream criminology embodies this very notion of men as the norm. Women remain 'irrational', 'impulsive', 'neurotic' and 'hormonal' and femininity is oppositional to everything associated with rationality. Rationality proper is equated to masculinity and men are rational. Men engage in masculine activities and they achieve masculinity by being rational and sometimes (often) by engaging in criminal activities. If crime is a resource for doing masculinity (Messerschmidt 1993) then so too is acting rationally. To act rationally is to be laddish or manly. For men and boys, crime, rationality and masculinity all fit together and have been made to 'make sense' as social action. If crime offers 'lads' and men a '*daring opposition masculinity*' (Messerschmidt in Newburn and Stanko 1994:97) rationality offers them a legitimate and traditional masculinity. Rationality is a resource for achieving masculinity. Rationality can be applied to legal and extra legal contexts for men and women alike and this approach has been further and more thoroughly explored in relation to men and masculinities than it has for women and girls and femininities.

Different appreciations of women's rationality might also be considered alongside the notion of 'doing – gender' the theoretical formulation most extensively demonstrated by West and Colleagues (1987, 1995). In terms of doing-gender, males and females achieve gender within the realm of everyday life and during interaction with each other. Thus, initially gender was reconceptualised as a routine accomplishment embedded in everyday action (1987) and later the same terms used in 'doing - gender' were extended to 'doing race' and 'class' (Daly, 1997) so that a new understanding of 'difference' is that it is viewed as an ongoing interactional accomplishment. This new focus on gender as something, which is socially constructed sees gender as 'omnirelevant'. Moreover, it is something we are accountable for and any occasion offers the resources for doing it. Similarly 'doing - difference' explains how gender, race and class operate simultaneously and like gender is a process. Race and class are similarly ongoing methodical, and situated accomplishments (Lorber 1994, Simpson and Elis 1995, West and Fenstermaker, 1995, West and Zimmerman 1987, 1995).

Working under these theoretical formulations but within criminology, Messerschmidt presents crime as a resource for the 'doing' of masculinity (1993). He later (1997) suggests that criminological theorising needs to be sensitive to how women/girls as women/girls occasionally commit violence and how gender differences in crime often obscure gender similarities in crime. Miller's (1998) research begins to develop this perspective and argues women:

> *'do not appear to 'do robbery' differently than men in order to meet different needs or accomplish different goals. Instead, the differences that emerge reflect practical choices made in the context of a gender-stratified environment...'*

This evidence warrants further criminological attention. Women/girls as women/girls not only commit violence occasionally but they more routinely commit property and economic crimes and the full range of gender patterned offences and offending could be explored under these same gender-sensitive theoretical constructs. Several contributors to this new body of work demonstrate (See Newburn and Stanko, 1994; Messerschmidt, 1993; Daly, 1997; Joe-Laidler and Hunt 2001, Miller, 1998) that there are variations in the application of 'doing – gender' particularly where masculinity is concerned. As Newburn and Stanko (1994) have observed identity has been offered as a tool, as something that needs to be accomplished. These editors show how men, masculinities and crime can be examined in this new theoretical formulation. How women, femininities and crime will take shape is yet to be fully or adequately explored. Whether or not rational (instrumental) crime for economic gain is part of doing gender and difference where women and girls construct specific types of femininities is open for consideration. Indeed an assessment of whether or not women are 'doing - gender' and 'difference' using crime as a resource for this accomplishment is charting new ground as women's criminality used to be seen as a denial of femininity and they were doubly punished for being criminal and unfeminine. 'Doing – gender' might see women's criminality quite differently. In this formulation crime is a resource for accomplishing gender identity and fulfilling gender roles. This reformulation of gender would for example expect the goods males and females shoplift to be different, and the roles men and women occupy in the drug market to be different (See Maher, 1997 Taylor 1993, Measham 2002). In consequence, male and female methods of operating, networks of redistribution and ways of earning an illegal living would be different: men are burglars because this is demonstrably masculine; and women (and men) perceive prostitution and shoplifting

as female activities. Different ways of appreciating women's ways of rationalising might lead to gendered ways of achieving gender and/or difference.

(vii) Conclusion

So far it appears that men and women's motives for doing economic crime might be collapsed into common groupings of motivations including motivations linked to survival and need as well as greed, gain and power. Economic greed, gain and power might be loosely recognised as one common form of motivation in which the desire for economic rewards and material possessions attracts offenders to crime. In Weberian terms this is 'instrumental' rationality and whilst within criminology this is most typically represented as the rational choice perspective a brief critique demonstrates that this is unlikely to survive the 'generalisability' test.

Those motivations linked to economic survival and need are well developed in relation to understanding women's crime and feminist criminological theorising has elaborated upon this notion of basic survival. Under this common motivation women's criminality is largely determined and explained by economic marginalisation and the feminisation of poverty thesis. Often in close proximity to this explanation we find the concept of exploitation is employed to explain and justify women's offending habits and patterns. Thus, is it essentially materialist explanations and motivations that are called upon to explaining women's crime and criminality. When applied to women specifically as offenders this becomes a feminist materialist explanation for women's doing of crime where women's pathway into crime is intrinsically linked to men, patriarchy, and the domination of hegemonic masculinity.

Male power and domination, men and masculinist traditions are seen to push women into particular forms of criminal activity.

Whilst feminist understandings and appreciations of women's crime and criminality reveal explanations, justifications and reasons for women's doing of economic crime as intrinsically linked to materialism, this extensive review and critique suggests there may be gaps and inconsistencies between the data and the theorisation. In the next chapter, I show how the research questions identified in Chapter One are investigated through both empirical research and a theoretical examination of women's motivations to do economic crime.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY: RESEARCHING WOMEN AND CRIME FOR ECONOMIC GAIN

(i) Introduction

In this chapter I describe more fully the methodological approach and outline the research design and the research process. In Chapters Two and Four I use data derived from an e-mail survey alongside data derived from secondary sources and 'official' glossaries to complete the literature review and to begin to classify women's economic crimes. However, what shaped and informed the research design was my concern to accomplish research sensitive to women's understandings and appreciation of their own criminality. From the outset I wanted, therefore, to collect data first hand and in Chapter One I signify my intention to conduct interviews and use observational methods for exploring the gender patterning of crime. How these observations were made and how the data obtained was triangulated with other data derived from documents and official statistics is described below. In the main, this chapter addresses the most significant part of my empirical investigation, which was interviewing female offenders. As indicated in Chapter One in order to explore the experience and motivations of women who do crime for economic gain and the apparently contradictory motivations of economic need and greed, interviews were conducted with offending women. Semi-structured interviews took place with women in prison and with a smaller number of women in the community. Interviews focussed upon four core areas: the variety and extent of women's criminality, initial and post-hoc reasons and justifications for specific instances of criminality, means and methods

of carrying out crimes, and women's views of themselves as offenders. (A more detailed checklist can be found in Appendix 2: Interview Schedule.) This Chapter describes how the data for this thesis were collected and the associated problems of obtaining this ethically. It also covers some issues of data presentation, analysis, case study and theory building.

The fundamental orientation and the overall perspectives implicit and explicit in the research are indicated in Chapter One where I also discussed the interchange between problem, theory and method and suggested that feminist consciousness was core to my thinking and approach as a reflexive practitioner during the conduct, process and analysis of the research (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995, Maynard and Purvis 1994, Stanley and Wise 1993). In reviewing the literature, a variety of themes relating to the notion of women, crime, criminality and the notion of economic need and greed were identified. Gaps and omissions in our criminological knowledge and understanding, as well as feminist concerns about existing research and theorising surrounding women's crime for economic gain were found. The focussed research questions I identify demand that the research is underpinned and informed by quanlitative research logic. Furthermore, in wanting to know why women commit property and economic crimes, it makes sense to ask them, allowing for an appreciation by understanding (Jupp et al 2000) as well as scope for continuous discovery (Glaser and Strauss 1967). This fosters the theorisation of the behaviour of women who do crime for economic gain and the development of fuller explanation through theory building.

Whilst there are different ways of exploring motivations to commit crime, fieldwork, with an emphasis on interviewing is perhaps the most widely used approach amongst

feminists concerned with understanding and theorising women's crime. Stebbins suggests that exploration might be thought of as a perspective, *'a state of mind, a special personal orientation'* (Stebbins 2001:30) toward approaching and carrying out a social study whilst the notion of 'concatenated exploration' (Stebbins 2001:12) is called upon to emphasise how exploration refers to the overall approach to data collection not only at the beginning but also throughout the research. In line with such an exploratory approach towards female motivations to commit crime the research design and overall conduct of the research and analysis can described as flexible as well as pragmatic. In striving to make these guiding principles core to the research inquiry, an appreciative perspective is strongly suggested in terms of operationalisation and the precedent is set for such an approach in some of the studies reviewed in Chapter 2 where the offender's perspective was evident in the qualitative descriptions of perpetrators' experiences of doing crime.

(ii) Research Design

The research design evolved and the need for conducting qualitative interviews with women grew naturally in the early stages of the research. The shape of the interviews and the sampling process was also informed by my visits to courts in 1996 and from discussions with agency officials, many of who became gatekeepers to the research, including probation staff, community safety and outreach workers. I also made observations of proceedings involving female offenders at Magistrates (including the locally named DSS and TV Licence courts) and Crown Courts on nine separate visits to the courts' public galleries. Contemporaneous notes and ideas were taken from my exploratory discussions and 'focussed conversations' and I noted these together with

the advice, information, and suggestions and contacts details offered by these key contact personnel in a reflexive diary. Whilst my heavy reliance upon the interview method as my primary means of collecting data is suitable for exploring offenders motivations from the appreciative perspective[5] it does not adequately capture the context of the women's *everyday social life* (Malinowski 1961) or the full socio-economic context at the everyday local level. My reflexive diary allowed for me to compensate for this in various ways. It enabled me to elaborate upon some of the less literal forms of dialogue (Mason 1996) throughout the research process and it also enabled me to assemble additional data about women's crime and criminality and about their *'economy, life-style and daily activities'* in a similar way to which the diary was used by Lewis (1959) (cited in Sapsford and Jupp 1996:301). I also collected and analysed an array of secondary and documentary data from my early preparations for entering the field, including court lists.

Courts-based probation staff; witness support co-ordinators and court ushers, all confirmed the small number of female offenders facing the criminal courts. Greater numbers faced the locally so-called DSS and TV licence courts, although as Cook (1989) observed in the previous decade, supplementary fraud prosecutions in a Magistrates' courts tend to have a gender bias with generally consistent ratios: males – 70%: females – 30%. My observations in Crown and Magistrates Courts thus provide an indication of the variety, volume and gender patterning of offences. I observed female defendants who were accused of thefts, including theft from a shop,

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[5] I use this term to represent a loose combination of approaches to doing criminological research which Jupp (2000) has summarised in the term 'appreciation by understanding'. Examples of such approaches include Glaser and Strauss' (1967) grounded approach, Matza (1969), Parker (1974) and classic appreciative studies from the Chicago School of the 1920s and 1930s, as well as influences from interactionists and labelling such as Becker (1963). These studies produce an appreciative account of the deviant's own story in his or her own terms.

attempted theft, obtaining by deception, employee theft, false accounting and stealing money, stealing cheque book and guarantee card, making false declaration to obtain benefit from the DSS, possession of offensive weapon in a public place, breach of probation requirement, possession of cannabis with intent to supply, criminal damage, aggravated burglary dwelling, threat to kill, assault on police, and robbery. Also witnessed were an application for the varying of bail conditions and a breach of a suspended sentence.

In addition to these observations, from secondary data obtained from the courts I was able to analyse court lists. My analysis of these shows that of all the cases dealt with at Newcastle Magistrates Courts between February and July 1996, women typically made up between 13 and 16 % of those facing charges. This analysis is in line with the official picture and ratio of female offending to male of 5:1 and the National gender ratios in the courts. Ages of defendants ranged from 16 years at the time of the offence up to 40. The majority were in their twenties. The observations also confirm that the majority of charges facing female defendants fall into the category of thefts and fraud. The picture presented demonstrates official portrayals of female crime but also how broad generalisations obtained from national studies and statistics can mask the wider variety of offences with which women are charged. My preliminary work also suggested the importance of interviewing women in prison as well as in the community. Not only might there be qualitative differences in the seriousness and longevity of their offending patterns but there may be different opportunities to explore their respective motivations in different interview settings.

The components described above together with my prison and community based interviews, as well as the subsequent inductive and analytical use of the case studies are felt to complement (Brannen 1992) each other and triangulate so that any problems associated with one strategy may be compensated for by the strengths of another (Jupp 1989, Sayer 1992).

Accessing the Prison to do In-Depth Interviewing

Largely due to practical considerations I entered the field at a very early stage of the research in January 1997 to conduct pilot interviews with women. Access was negotiated directly with a local Prison Department institution to conduct semi-structured interviews with women on remand or sentenced. Initially, I had planned to conduct pilot interviews as when research involves doing interviews and using interview schedules piloting is seen as essential (Keats 2000, Mason 1996, Wilson in Sapsford and Jupp 1996) as well as a useful way of assessing the overall design of the interview and the quality, breadth, depth, range and ordering of the questions. Practical issues can be usefully addressed during the pilot investigation and reliability and validity issues can be tested. In effect, my plans to conduct pilot interviews were swiftly overtaken by the opportunity to commence full and lengthy interviews on my first visit to the prison.

Whilst I was not constrained by lack of financial backing as prison based research often is, I had anticipated that my experience of accessing women and of conducting research on a day to day basis, especially in the prison setting might suffer from some 'politics of doing criminological research' (Carlen 1994, 2002, Hillyard et al. 2002, Hughes 2000, Martin 2000, Walters 2003). Whilst feminist researchers have engaged

in a variety of different methodologies in prison research (Genders and Player 1987), the purpose of their research has generally been to investigate some aspect of the prison system or how inmates experience it (see the work of Carlen in particular 1985 to date and Genders and Player 1987). My concern was not with the prison *per se* nor with women's experiences of imprisonment but with female offenders' opinions and motivations for their doing of crime. This lack of critical interest in prison as a form of institution appeared to enhance my speedy access to women in prison at Governor level and facilitated my welcome return. I was conscious of my luck in gaining swift access to a closed institution and, given that I had prepared by reading the methodological literature and was drawing upon a framework of epistemological and methodological ideas about interviewing practice, I felt that I came to the interviewing process fairly well prepared. Thus, anxious not to lose out on this immediate access and keen to capitalise upon it bearing in mind the renowned difficulties in accessing prisons ostensibly for the purposes of research following Cohen and Taylor (1972) as well as other researchers difficulties especially regarding the length of time it can take to gain access to female subjects for research (Miller 2001, O'Brien 2004, Smith and Wincup 2000), I took advantage of the opportunity to commence my interviewing proper and to select my sample.

The Prison Sample

The majority of the interviews I conducted took place in a single prison institution and the 'Prison Sample' became my main sample in terms of sample size. Respondents were selected within the prison sample in the following way. Initial contact with one or two willing interviewees was achieved through a filter system whereby the 'type' of offender – those likely to have committed 'economic crimes' - was described to the

prison officer in charge of the wing. Where specific terms are used in the formulation of research problems it is important to define or at least classify these in the context of the project. For the purpose of interviewing, 'economic crimes' included most varieties of property crimes. Typical examples were suggested to the officer in charge of the wing and included most varieties of theft (including shoplifting and pilfering, frauds and forgery, as well as many crimes that come under the general heading of white-collar crimes), burglary and car crimes as well as prostitution and drug related offences. These crimes are more likely to contribute to the illegal marketplace and have been referred to as 'crime for gain' (Field, 1990). I also provided the officer with a copy of an 'Introduction Sheet' (Appendix 3a) for his information and to help in his selection of respondents. Initial contact with one or two willing interviewees was achieved as described above. This approach is similar to Miller's research where young women were initially approached about her project by agency staff (Miller 2001:220) who, like the officer in charge of the wing, briefly described the study and asked if prospective respondents might be willing to take part.

In coming face-to-face with a respondent I read out my aims from the Introduction Sheet (Appendix 3a). The response was overwhelmingly good. Only one woman appeared hesitant and was less forthcoming than the remainder of the sample in discussing her criminal activities. This, it seems, was entirely due to her remand status and she was understandably reticent about discussing past and more recent criminal activities whilst in custody and with a stranger. After three or four interviewees had been selected in this manner I changed the method of selecting the sample so that interviewees themselves would suggest names of other women that might be willing to be interviewed. The sample thus became a snowball sample where interviewees

were in the main self-selecting. Although self-selecting, snowball sampling is an acceptable and ethical method of sampling, but there can be problems in respect of typicality, representativeness and bias. None of these problems apply in respect of this research. Indeed, the benefits outweighed the potential drawbacks both in terms of securing my sample and of enhancing confidentiality and trust. The spur to altering the method of sample selection in the prison setting arose during the scenario described below.

Having described to the officer on the wing the type of offences (and therefore I hoped the type of offender) I was researching, the selection of inmates to approach was initially at his discretion. Unsurprisingly, the vast majority of the women had at some time committed offences relevant to the research. This was mostly established early on in the interview as the purpose of the discussion was described, and it was soon discovered what each of the women were currently being detained for. On the first afternoon of interviewing however, I was introduced to a diminutive woman on remand for an alleged and very serious violent offence. We continued our discussion talking about her circumstances and her life in general before the meeting ended whereupon she politely thanked me for spending time talking with her. The member of staff as usual after each interview was curious to know once again how it had progressed. Confidentiality in respect of interview material obtained from all the women was carefully maintained and prohibited me from disclosing anything more than vague and general comments. On this occasion however, the male officer was clearly amused and was testing out my reactions and how I would cope upon discovering the nature of her alleged crime. It was all done in good humour and

although the interview had proved an interesting experience it was not useful for the purposes of gathering hard data.

This incident also served as a salutary reminder that I was relatively powerless within the overall context of the prison and shows how the intensity of interviewing in closed institutions is fuelled not only by the potentially exploitative dynamics of the interviewer-interviewee relationship[6] (Oakley 1981, Gelsthorpe 1992) but by the broader context of the closed institution and by the interpersonal dynamics between those who are incarcerated there and those who work there as well as those with outsiders like myself (Liebling 2001, Liebling and Stanko 2001). This episode together with another brief encounter and exchange with another male officer in the tea room also demonstrates how I was regarded with great suspicion in similar fashion to that noted by Gelsthorpe when working in a prison (Gelsthorpe 1990). The prison officer encountered in the tea room was clearly put out that I was more interested in female inmates than those working in the prison environment and also that I wasn't primarily concerned to hear their views about the female inmates. The general suspicion of me as a woman interested in female offenders was hard to distinguish from suspicion of me as a university researcher and such suspicion can affect the dynamics of the research as well as the ability to effectively conduct the research, as such suspicion impacts upon the power that intermediary gatekeepers (men) have over the research experience. Whilst I had expected some difficulties at various levels to accessing women in prison, these did not materialise and my speedy access gave me confidence and encouragement which enabled me to cope with scepticism, suspicion

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[6] Whilst I superficially shared some small aspect of their cultural position as a woman, I clearly simultaneously occupied other cultural standpoints as a white, thirty-something researcher, lecturer and so on.

and distrust of me and my research as shown from some prison staff on a day-to-day basis (Gelsthorpe 1990, Liebling et al 1999).

After the interview referred to above I exerted greater control over the selection of interviewees in prison. The change from officer selection to snowball sampling was done for two reasons. First, officer selection, even when carefully managed, is ethically problematic. Women may feel reluctant to refuse an officer who has such control over their everyday lives. On meeting women through this method of selection, although they were still free to refuse me, this remained ethically difficult. Snowball and self-selecting sampling allowed the women more power over their decision to participate. Second, the initial involvement of an officer in the selection process helped to enhance my credibility with staff and ability to access respondents more directly, both of these instrumental factors gave me and the women more control and power over the selection process. This was achieved by asking women who were particularly helpful and forthcoming about their committing of 'economic crimes' to suggest other inmate's names to me for interviewing purposes. This snowball sampling method signified a more grounded form of research practice but also signalled that a degree of collusion and connection with the inmates was being achieved and this allowed them to become self-selecting. Nevertheless, the same pattern of initial face-to-face discussion took place in order to secure informed consent prior to each and every interview. Several inducements – as discussed below - were also clearly contributing to this pattern of recruitment.

Daylong visits to the institution in the early months of 1997 enabled a series of focussed interviews to be conducted and a total of twenty-one interviews eventually

took place in either a corner of the large visiting room when not in use for visits, or in one of two very small and claustrophobic interview rooms on 'the wing'. Detailed notes were taken from each interview on an interview schedule specifically designed for this purpose. Permission had not been granted by the Governor for the tape recording of any of the interviews in prison. I did not ask the reason for this but was later to discover through spending lengthy periods on the wing, that the extent of the noise in female prisons is formidable. The level of day time noise was extreme and included loud banging of heavy metal doors, banging on these same doors, the clinking of chains and keys, the clip clop of heels, high pitched shrieking and the shouting of obscenities and swearing from inmates. The prison authorities were likely not to want the outside world to hear any of this and none of it would have made for a good quality audio tape recording.

Accessing Women in the Community to do In-depth Interviewing

Unlike my successful negotiation of access to the prison sample, my attempts to gain access to women in the community were more challenging and time consuming. Several aspects of 'the politics of doing research' (Hughes 2000) are well illustrated in my endeavour to gain access to women who had offended, or who continued to offend and who (still) had their freedom and liberty. In early 1997 I simultaneously began seriously negotiating access with both the prison and probation services. My probation contacts soon lead to me securing assistance from the most senior levels of the probation service and in principle access was granted. However, moving from one level of access to another within the probation service proved particularly time consuming and much patience and persistence was required to secure the interviews.

Several issues compounded the delay in gaining access to interviewees in the community via probation networks. Access had been approved and suggestions made as to how to progress the fieldwork by members at senior management levels including the Chief of Probation and the Information Officer. Meanwhile contacts were also made and co-operation enlisted from sources at ground level in the service, from probation officers that experienced routine and direct contact with female offenders on their caseload. However, in order to progress the research it was found that support and clearance was also required from middle management, namely team leaders in local areas. This layer of personnel also needed to be apprised and given the opportunity to give approval. As a researcher eager and impatient to follow up early successes and maintain the momentum of the interview process, getting the community based probation introductions proved hard work. At times it was felt that 'they' (middle management) were hoping I would give up and go away. Phone calls were often frustrating and made in vain or only resulted in my being asked once more to provide written details of the research in general and what was required of the probation service in particular. Follow up telephone calls often seemed to 'pass the buck' on to someone else or the individual that it was necessary to speak with was on holiday or sick leave.

With hindsight it was clear that there were other complicating factors at work during this period of time in the probation service. A review process was causing tremendous uncertainty and insecurity in the service generally and amongst individual employees about their jobs and futures. This unsettling situation was having its effects upon one part of the service after another throughout the fieldwork period when morale was low and long-term sickness high. Nevertheless, despite

experiencing difficulties caused by outside influences and the politics within the probation service, appointments were successfully secured to visit probation-run women's groups as a prelude to securing one-to-one interviews via snowball sampling.

The Community Sample

A similar approach to selecting respondents and briefing them in advance of the interview was followed (Using the Introduction Sheet Appendix 3b) for all but one of the community sample. Where the intermediary 'agency official' had been the officer in charge of the wing in prison, the agency official in the community was an officer from the Probation Service. Thus all of the women interviewed in the community sample were contacted via probation service contacts. Natasha, who was one of the two respondents later selected for inclusion in a case study was an ex-client of a retired probation officer. The remainder of them, including Claudia, the second respondent selected for inclusion in a case study, were connected to a probation-run women's group in a different probation jurisdiction. In all of these cases, apart from Natasha, women were specifically located on my behalf by a serving probation gatekeeper. The gatekeeper was asked to present an 'Introduction Sheet' to their client (Appendix 3b). This sheet briefly stated the aims of the research and asked whether the client would agree to be interviewed by myself. I presented the same sheet again at the start of each private interview and as with the prison sample respondents were free to decline being interviewed at any stage and were offered the chance to ask questions about the research. Where possible and when consent was freely given, these lengthier interviews were tape-recorded but the majority involved note taking.

The Prison and the Community Sample

The full sample (The Prison and the Community Sample together) comprised twenty-six women in total. Twenty-one interviews took place in prison and five in the community, thus the total sample was mainly made up of women in prison. This was due largely to practical and pragmatic reasons including ease, speed and convenience following protracted negotiations concerning access.

There are several limitations to my study resulting from the sampling. First, there is the problem of relying on interviews with women who have come to the attention of the authorities. Whilst this does not invalidate the findings it does over represent women who have committed crimes for which they have been penalised. I did not achieve adequate access or data from female respondents who may be doing economic crimes and alternative varieties of activities that comprise the 'dark figure' of crime and offending and that might have economic value in the informal or criminal economies. More importantly however, it may be that such women have different experiences, explanations and justifications for their 'offending' that I have been unable to discover. In part this was addressed by questioning women about the crimes that had come to the attention of the authorities as well as those crimes they had committed but which had not been detected. The interview schedule posed specific questions about the sorts of crimes the women had personally done but also probed whether they had been caught for these or not. Question three for example: *Have you ever been in trouble before? What for?* was aimed at quickly establishing the patterning of their offending in terms of the variety and extent of it but also checked whether or not they had been caught for each of the activities they offered as examples and thus whether these 'crimes' were 'official' or 'hidden'. My follow up

question tried to gauge the 'dark figure' of their offending by asking for an approximation of the number of times they had committed offences but had got away with them. Further follow up questions later in the interviews were designed to check validity and gauge the most and least detected types of crimes for women. Shoplifting consistently featured as the most undetected and unrecorded of all crime types. In terms of their motivations and justifications for offending there were no obvious distinctions between their officially known or hidden offending patterns.

Another concern is that the sample is restricted to women and females over the age of 17; again it may be that girls have different experiences, explanations and justifications for their offending that I have been unable to discover. And finally, similar to many qualitative and appreciative studies, the sample is relatively small (Carlen, 1985, 1988; Miller, 2001; Noaks and Wincup, 2004). My experience, as noted in this chapter, was that it was both difficult and time-consuming to gain access to women for lengthy interviews. This is especially difficult in the prison context where practicalities entirely dictate the location and largely dictate the length of interviews. Most of the prison-based interviews were between 50-65 minutes duration and there were limits to the depth of discussion imposed by these time restrictions. Nevertheless, common experiences of offending emerged from the prison-based sample and as a snapshot sample, the women's recent offending closely match those of imprisoned women generally. Furthermore, given the size of my total sample, my main goal is not to generalise about women who do economic crime or crime for economic gain but to break down some generalisations and provide a rich analysis of what criminalised women do in respect of economic crimes, how they do it and to seek greater insight into why. Based on this, I anticipated that theoretical testing,

comparison, revision and theory would be possible. The more detailed qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with women in the community facilitated the analytical case study analysis as discussed in Chapter Seven and this aspect of the methodology allows for a richer analysis and lends greater depth to the study. The realities of conducting research dependent upon interviews with offenders and/or identified ex-offenders means that the selection of cases is often fortuitous rather than a product of careful design and planning. The cases were selected on the basis of fulfilling a basic criterion. Each had engaged in at least one or more of the economic crimes noted above.

In-Depth Interviewing

I relied on the method of in-depth interviewing using a semi-structured format as the primary way of eliciting women's accounts, explanations, justifications and motivations for offending. Whilst semi-structured interviews using a checklist of items for discussion (Appendix 2: Interview Schedule) enabled me as interviewer and researcher to engage in dialogue about and explore the reasons for the women's crimes and criminality, they also facilitate the collection of other forms of data through non-verbal communications, facial expressions and gestures, all of which can enrich the qualitative aspects of the data and which were recorded in a reflexive diary. The initial checklist swiftly evolved into a core set of themes and questions that were similarly posed to each respondent although the schedule retained sufficient flexibility to explore reasons, accounts and illustrations of specific types of crime and criminality in greater depth and detail. The core themes of the interviews relate to four specific areas, the variety and extent of crimes engaged in, reasons for engaging in

criminal activity, means and methods of carrying out the crimes, how they viewed themselves and women generally as criminals. The schedule was designed to explore the extent, range and specific types of crimes the interviewees engaged in together with detailed descriptions and illustrations of the ways in which women select and carry out such crimes. The list of offences/activities that I included as prompts were shoplifting, cheque/credit card, social security frauds, and other thefts for example cars, burglary, robbery, drugs related, prostitution, at work for example stealing, fiddling. The interview was therefore largely offence based. In this way a great deal of information and story telling was generated with plenty of opportunities for the women to elaborate upon a number of specific types and varieties of criminal activity in some detail whilst also allowing the women to reflect upon their own experiences.

Similarly to Miller (2001), once I was face-to-face with individual women, and in advance of interviewing, I read aloud the description of the aims of the study and related my serious intentions to respect and protect confidentiality. I explained my promise of anonymity in my subsequent analysis and writing up (Carlen and Worrall 2004, Noaks and Wincup 2004) and I also stressed to the women individually that interviews were voluntary, that they did not have to participate and that they were free to decline the invitation to be interviewed or to terminate the interview at any point. Additionally, I reassured the women that they could ask questions about the research at any stage.

The interview schedule was designed to familiarise and relax respondents from the outset by asking each woman to tell me a little bit about herself including where she come from and what she did. This elicited important initial descriptions of a

biographical nature. I then asked a question related to their criminality in order to begin to explore the variety of their offending. Suggesting they might begin with their most recent experience of offending, or in the case of the women in prison their reason for being detained, I posed the following question: *Tell me about why you're here – what did you do?*

The same semi-structured interview schedule was used in both the prison and community although it was departed from more frequently in the community setting which was more conducive to a more conversational style discussion. This was particularly evident in those interviews that were later to be analysed as case studies. Thus, some of the interviews were less structured, more lengthy and detailed than others and two follow-up interviews with respondents from the community based sample moved little beyond conversation (Burgess 1984), again I here refer to the interviews conducted with women who were later to be included in the analysis as case studies.

(iii) Research Dilemmas

Ethics

Criminologists have a Code of Ethics compiled by Gelsthorpe, Tarling and Wall (1999), which advises researchers to adopt the principle of informed consent and to conduct themselves with honesty and integrity and with consideration and respect for their research subjects. In conducting my research with criminalized women I was at pains to ensure that participants not only agreed and fully consented to participate as

far as I could ascertain of their own free choice and without being pressurised or influenced, but also that they were fully informed about what they were consenting to.

In accordance with these principles, informed consent was obtained at several different levels. Most importantly, consent to interview the women was obtained directly, privately and verbally from each and every woman face to face by myself as above. As interviewing proceeded, I made efforts to renew and refresh respondents' consent. For example, I sought assurance of Natasha's continued informed consent after I had transcribed our first interview. I sent the lengthy typed transcript to her home address with a covering letter asking her if she would like to confirm or alter the transcription and I also enclosed a stamped return address envelope. She did not reply and I have had no further contact with her but I have gone on to incorporate Natasha as part of a case study feature as discussed in Chapter Seven. Whilst my commitment to conducting ethically principled, non-judgemental or exploitative research is strong, I doubt the extent to which consent can ever be fully informed. Whilst the principle might be generally adhered to, at any stage of the research it is questionable how informed this can be, especially where research cuts across cultural and linguistic divides. Similarly it is questionable how far participants can ever fully understand what it is to which they are committing themselves and what use will be made of the research of which they are a part. This is acutely relevant when the research is in part theoretically inspired and the research design and analysis is evolving and developmental. In this sense I view informed consent as an ideal-typical principle to which all social research should aspire but in practice it may be impossible to achieve consent that is fully informed (Davies, in Jupp forthcoming 2005).

With the prison-based sample it was not so easy to spend additional time or indeed follow up ethical matters but strict procedures were also adopted in respect of confidentiality and anonymity at both research sites and with all respondents. All respondents provided me with a first name, which may or may not have been their real name. All of these names have subsequently been changed and replaced by pseudonyms so that the women remain anonymous. Those women interviewed in prison were not anonymous to one prison staff member at the time of interviewing but the content of their individual interviews remained confidential during my prison visits and I am confident that respondents cannot be individually identified in my analysis and writing up.

Location and Safety

A private location is crucial for the conduct of confidential interviews and my research sites posed different research dilemmas including ethical and safety issues. In the prison interviews took place in interview rooms or secluded spot in a visiting room. Whilst a private location within probation-building space was my preferred location for conducting the community-based interviews, such premises are not an ideal venue at which to discuss past and present offending patterns and routines and I could not rely upon their availability. I considered several alternative venues at which I might conduct the community-based interviews. Bringing women to my own office at the university would have been a convenient, private and safe location from my point of view but less satisfactory for the interviewee. Also, I could not guarantee their privacy from colleagues and students, many of whom knew I was in the throes of doing interviews in connection with my research interests. I did not want to

compromise the women's anonymity, risk breaching confidentiality or any other ethical principles.

Two other options remained real possibilities. First, a café close to the women's local probation office and second, the opportunity to conduct interviews in the interviewee's own home might arise. Three locations eventually hosted interviews with the community-based sample. Two women were interviewed on two occasions in a private room at their local probation office, another two women were interviewed separately in a café close to their probation office and one respondent was interviewed on two separate visits at her own home. Several potential risks to my own safety gave me cause for concern and these inevitably arise during the course of research focussing on crime, and offending and that involves direct contact between the researcher and the researched (Carlen and Worrall 2004, King and Wincup 2000, Wincup 2004). In my own experience the majority of the interviews took place in prison and some safety concerns, both in the prison and community locations, were assuaged by being assiduous about informing home and work, of my general location and likely time of return. Additionally in prison, several prison staff members were always aware of my presence on a wing and a member of staff was always either within earshot or a panic button available nearby.

Inducements

Others conducting research with impoverished women have offered specific inducements to interviewees and there are valid arguments of a practical and ethical nature both for and against this practice (McKeganey 2001). Many feminist researchers believe that poverty-stricken offenders should be paid (Carlen and Worrall

2004) and Miller (2001) paid her respondents. Inducements in the prison setting come in many forms, although payment for interviews conducted with prisoners is not allowed. I decided to carry small quantities of cigarettes to all interview venues together with a lighter (with permission from wing staff in the prison). This practice could be seen as part of the 'research bargain' and proved particularly useful in the prison setting where the vast majority of those interviewed suffered from an addiction to at least one drug. This complicated their patterns of offending, exacerbated the extent of it (these issues are discussed further in Chapters Five and Six) and to some extent it also affected the way in which some of the interviews were conducted. The provision of cigarettes to smoke during the interview appeared to help calm and compose the small minority of women who did exhibit signs of restlessness and found concentration and conversation difficult to maintain. The prison grapevine works quickly and efficiently and not only was there a 'Miss' (later I became Pam) who wanted to talk to them, and this was an inducement in itself as it held out the prospect of getting them out of cleaning the floor, or their cell, or simply doing nothing, but also it became known that I had cigarettes with me. This spread of rumour, interest and curiosity all combined to my advantage, as I became known in the prison.

Data Collection and Recording

Interviewing in prison is particularly oppressive and pressurised and additional research dilemmas are presented related to the practicalities of data collection and recording. What counts as data and how it is documented for future retrieval and analysis, is all affected by the researcher as interviewer's experience. The literal dialogue is only one product from interviews and this is shaped and influenced by the circular and inductive process of doing social inquiry in this way. Thus, I attempt to

capture some of the 'nitty gritty' of the research process, the contextual factors surrounding the whole experience of doing qualitative research and qualitative interviews. Such accounts of research experiences give us added value in the form of observational and 'reflective' data in addition to the 'literal dialogue' (Mason, 1996). For example I noted extra details surrounding the interviews. I recorded where and when they took place as well as details about what else was going on in the background - alarm bells, the clip clop of female officers heels in corridors and shouting in prison - who else was around – neighbours, children, babies, staff members and other contextual but factual details. These details and thoughts connected to them about the experiences of interviewing formed notes in my research diary. Additionally the face-to-face interviews allow for verbal as well as non-verbal cues and data to be observed, recorded and incorporated in subsequent analysis. An extract from an interview with Natasha illustrates:

N: *So me an Mandy was I the aisle with the trolley and Sandra was at one end of the aisle and Kelly was at the other and we were like walkin round to see if we could see if there was any walkers in an we used to have like this little code we used ter go like if there was a walker in we used ter go... 'these boots are made for walkin in'*....(singin and using fingers to indicate walking) *did yer ever see the yeller pages advert....*

Despite the advantages and previously stated preferences for adopting a semi-structured approach to interviewing, having prompted a respondent by way of a question, I then had to listen and occasionally prompt and encourage without 'leading' whilst also taking notes. I found this tiring, cumbersome and exhausting.

The benefits of conducting semi-structured interviews became especially evident however in the community based interviews. More time and a more relaxed atmosphere allowed me, during interviewing, to recall nuances which I could refer back to and this lead to elaborate rich and detailed descriptions of how shoplifting, and in this example fraud, was executed:

PD: *You mentioned before that you had done some benefit book stuff?*

N: *Yeah – wor we used to do was……*

Similarly, after a lengthy description of shoplifting, more detail was sought on security obstacles; an issue raised by the interviewee earlier in the interview but glossed over.

PD: *You mentioned security tags and foil?*

F: *It depended on the shops – some shops we would just...*

The above quotes have been drastically truncated but indicate how the stories of particular ways and means of doing economic crimes were elicited and what the women's motivations were on these particular occasions.

In the majority of interviews, including all of those in prison, contemporaneous notes were taken. Three interviews were tape-recorded. Additional reflexive notes were made very soon after the interviews. In doing this, the dynamics of the conversation that were not immediately written down or might not have been captured on tape are not lost as data. I personally transcribed all the tape-recorded interviews in full. Although this was very time-consuming it was essential that I did so as the quality of

some of the recordings was compromised by household noises and by strong accents to which as interviewer I had become accustomed.

Note taking during the interview situation was neither easy nor unobtrusive. Sometimes the nature of the accounts being offered affected my ability to record data as eye contact was often demanded and encouraging non-verbal gestures hindered my ability to make notes. As indicated above, and as I have documented elsewhere (Davies 2000) use of language occasionally affected the smoothness of my record keeping although I quickly absorbed prison or street slang and used it in my prompts. In terms of recording the women's motivations, sometimes specific phrases and words used by the women are the only ones to properly encapsulate their meaning and sense and wherever possible these key phrases were recorded verbatim. On other occasions the gist of the account was sufficient to record. I found myself constantly striving to strike a balance between stemming the flow of the discussion, maintaining it, getting the key parts down on paper and the remainder stored in my memory. I found it essential to adopt a method of knowing which are the précised bits of the interview and which are the direct quotes as these would be very difficult to decipher after the interview.

Data Processing and Analysis

Whilst all of the remaining chapters are derived from an analysis of the data, the chapters referred to most specifically here form Part 2 of the thesis and comprise chapters four through to seven. It is in these chapters that the data analysis illustrates the key forms of economic crimes that women do. More specifically they give scope to describe the gendered patterning of crime, how the women 'do' various 'economic'

crimes and for the theming and tabulation of different reasons/justifications/motivations they give for doing them.

As Tavers points out, the interpretive researcher is only interested in how people understand what they are doing in any social setting and does not accept that the analyst knows more about society than the people he or she is studying. '*Thus interpretive and critical researchers will always disagree over how they understand language*' (Travers 2002: 123). Through adapted and flexible use of the semi-structured interview as the key method of inquiry I have largely followed a grounded and appreciative perspective. The ways in which I approach the data processing and analysis are intended to uphold and maintain this commitment by remaining faithful to the respondent's use of language and as faithful as possible to how the respondents explain and interpret their actions for themselves.

Notwithstanding the potential criticisms over the selection, use and interpretation of language, as noted by Travers above, the transcripts of all of the interviews were first analysed into themed data sets according to the core areas of questioning identified in Chapter One (the variety and extent of women's criminality, initial and post-hoc reasons and justifications for specific instances of criminality, means and methods of carrying out crimes, women's views of themselves as offenders). Thereafter, the data was purposefully 'read' several times over so that the data could be organised according to specific notions of the economic. First, the data was inspected for any reference to the economic and it was then read for references to rational choice. I interrogated the data related to these notions by asking myself questions about the extent to which women's criminality can be recognised in 'economic' or 'economy'

terms and whether the women talked in terms of economic or other motives. The interview notes and transcripts were thoroughly searched for how women articulate their crime stories and how their vocabularies variously illustrated or might be interpreted as being associated with the economic. Similarly, associations and references to rationality were scrutinised from amongst the women's explanations, reasons, justifications and motivations for engaging in their crimes. This process necessarily involves an examination of the content of the speech and the use of language as well as the selection and use of extensive quotations.

At another level of analysis, I also interrogated the data to discern whether or not rational action was evident. Thus, the data was scrutinised according to where along the line of human action and agency their talk best fitted. For example, did they talk in terms of rationality and rational choices or was irrationality and impulsiveness evident? Did the overview of the women's crime talk suggest they were passive actors, acted upon rather than acting or was their crime talk more suggestive of them acting out of their own free will even in terms of purposive action? Were they making their own destinies? How far did they appear to be shaping their own (anti-) social worlds? These readings of the data served to further draw out greater detail on whether crime was indeed crime for economic gain and further explored why and how women do crime for economic gain. The latter part of the analysis noted here would have been of limited use as a singular form of analysis and avenue for theoretical development but was nevertheless useful in allowing some general commonalities between the data obtained from different interviews to emerge. A wealth of data was amassed and my initial analytical approach explored several theoretical avenues. Nevertheless it became clear that this rather generalised thematic overview was

limited in its ability to demonstrate differences and nuances within the data that a re-reading of the original transcripts reminded me of. In order to re-capture the differences and make these visible alongside the commonalities in the analysis, I felt that a further method of presenting, analysing and 'reading' at least some of the data was warranted. As part of my analytical approach I therefore decided that a case study approach might be useful in this respect. Consequently two case studies were selected and two respondent's stories were revisited in much greater detail as part of my data analysis.

Case Studies

Use of the case study method is often employed as part of the research design where the aim is to generate greater detail, depth and specificity in research. This method is generally therefore commended for its usefulness in being able to obtain rich and particular data. The results from conducting the data analysis as described above left me uneasy about the extent to which the women's voices were being flattened and the data too conveniently collapsed together. As part of the data analysis, it occurred to me that I might adopt a case study approach which according to Denscombe (1998) typically focuses on the detailed workings of relationships and processes. Case studies appeared to offer a solution to my concern about better delineating in women's own terms their experience (Gilligan 1998). They would also reiterate women's voices to guard against or limit the extent to which their voices might be challenged, misheard or judged to be inferior to other moralities (Daly 2002:65). Indeed I feel the most significant outcome of the case studies was that they proved especially fruitful in helping enhance and develop the 'different voices and dialogues, different realities and different truths' approach. In Gilligan's words this means '*The reinterpretation of*

women's experience in terms of their own imagery of relationships' (1998:170). Whilst the qualitative case study is particularly appropriate in the context of investigating women who commit crime for economic gain, it is also important to point out the specific application of the case study method as it applies to this analysis.

According to Yin (2003) there are at least six basic different types of case study. The case study methodology adopted here best fits the 'exploratory' and 'descriptive' case study categories. Distinctively, the exploratory case study is concerned with discovery and with generating or building theory whilst the descriptive aspect of the case study prevents the closing off of too many avenues that might be suggested from other aspects of the data analysis and complements the notion of exploration. In presenting a case study that is also descriptive in orientation I hoped to more faithfully and vividly portray the complex combinations of women's motivations for doing economic crime.

During the course of my data analysis, rather than part of my research design, I therefore co-opted the use of the case study methodology and this led to a very specific demonstration of shoplifting as women's business. In terms of case definition, in this instance a 'case' is comprised of two individuals and the specific social activity of shoplifting. Following Denscombe's (1998) observation that case studies tend to place greater emphasis on relationships and processes than outcomes, a deep understanding of how women do shoplifting, as well as a fuller account of why they do it is best appreciated through gaining close and thorough detail of how shoplifting is carried out by women who do it and of those women's social

circumstances and relationships. In this sense the principles of the descriptive and exploratory case study apply well to the cases selected. The principles apply both to the selection of shoplifting as a social phenomena or activity but also to the two individual cases selected. The selection of in-depth interview data derived from two respondents allows for a fuller description of how shoplifting careers develop. The case study methodology offers the opportunity to present descriptive data on shoplifting in considerable depth. It also offers the opportunity to foreground two women's detailed and candid discussions of how they shoplift and why. In this respect the case study also provides the methodology most capable of demonstrating the '*subtleties and intricacies of complex social situations*' (Denscombe 1998: 39).

Returning to the important and often controversial issues of case selection, it is here that the alleged weaknesses of ethnography generally and of the small samples associated with case studies (Brewer 2000) requires careful consideration. The main disadvantage of the case study approach is that it is vulnerable to criticism regarding credibility and the extent to which cases are representative. This can lead to scepticism about the general validity of the research and allegedly limits the generalisability. Shoplifting is clearly representative of the crime category in which women specialise rather than prostitution or any other crime for economic gain. Shoplifting emerges as a distinctively significant crime of choice and specialism for women in my empirical data and this matches with the gender patterning of offending as evidenced in the Criminal Statistics for England and Wales (Home Office annually) and other representations of women's offending patterns as indicated in police and court records where thefts and shoplifting in particular dominate.

The two cases selected are from the community-based sample. The two women respondents have been given the pseudonyms Natasha and Claudia. Claudia was contacted via a serving female probation officer responsible for a women's group that met on a weekly basis on probation premises. Claudia claims she had previously been on licence but she continued to have contact with the group through her own choice. She described herself as 'a probation volunteer' meaning she was attending the women's groups on a regular basis as a client. By way of introduction Claudia immediately identified herself to me as 'Claudia the stocktaker' and she was selected on a similar basis as Natasha, that is, due to her shoplifting habit. Contact with Natasha was made through a retired female probation officer and her shoplifting career had reportedly ended a few years prior to interview. These stories were teased out of the various interview transcripts, contemporaneous notes and in Claudia's case her reflective diary, a diary she had written as a biographical account of her troubled life.

Like the majority of the women interviewed, it was clear that for Natasha and Claudia too, that shoplifting was a dominant feature of their offending and a regular and routine aspect of their lives. The first and briefer of the two interviews carried out with both Natasha and Claudia were conducted during the same period of time as the remainder of the interviews. Natasha and Claudia were qualitatively similar in their responses to semi-structured interviewing on the nature and extent of their involvement in crime, the reasons/justifications for participating in crime and specific varieties of it. A further and lengthier in-depth interview was carried out with both Natasha and Claudia after the remainder of the interviewing had ceased.

There are, however, significant differences between Natasha and Claudia and the majority of the prison sample. First, in obvious and practical terms Natasha and Claudia had their freedom. Access could be more freely negotiated, they could be interviewed at length and this could take place in the community. Further, Natasha and Claudia were lucid and capable of telling their stories about their shoplifting with ease and in comparatively relaxed environments. This touches upon another difference between the case studies and the majority of the sample and that concerns Natasha and Claudia's absence of any obvious personal drug habit or admission to a personal drug or alcohol habit. It did however emerge that both Natasha and Claudia were both indirectly connected drink/drugs. The complex relationship between women's patterns of offending and drug-related criminality is explored further in Chapters Five and Six and the theoretical significances of this are faced in the remainder of the theoretical chapters.

Thus although there were clearly pragmatic advantages to selecting Natasha and Claudia for case study purposes, and both cases can be justified on the grounds of their being 'intrinsically interesting' (Stake 1995) these are mostly chance bonuses and the main basis upon which the sampling of these two cases is justified is according to theoretical sampling procedures in order to facilitate theoretical inferences and generalisations. Thus, although an analytical case study of this nature might be susceptible to criticism for its small sample size, the key to making generalisations from case-oriented studies is effective sampling. In effect it is difficult to make claims regarding the extent to which either Natasha or Claudia are typical of the broader female shoplifting community. Alternatively, it is difficult to authoritatively state the extent to which they represent extreme cases. Thus whilst

Brewer (2000) questions the extent to which case studies can generate generalisable conclusions I argue that there are strong grounds on which to claim that empirical generalisations ought not to be precluded from my research findings as a whole. The inclusion of the case studies allowed theoretical developments to be more carefully explored whilst it also ensured I remained faithful to Claudia and Natasha. This approach also allowed some of the other women's voices to be more thoroughly contextualised and for my analysis to do better justice to the women's voices overall.

(iii) Conclusion

This chapter has described the methodological approach to the research and has outlined the research design and the key aspects of the research process. The fundamental orientation and the overall perspectives implicit and explicit in the research and the thesis are underpinned by a qualitative research methodology concerned with understanding the meanings and interpretation of women's crime for economic gain. Whilst qualitative research is distinctively associated with a variety of theoretical perspectives and methodologies, and whilst there are several methodological components giving rise to the overall research strategy, this research is nevertheless underpinned by open-ended methods in particular prioritising the in-depth semi-structured interview as the principle means of conducting reflexive exploratory and appreciative research.

Whilst the methodological approach described within this chapter suggests I adopted a clear research design, I have also outlined the story of how the analysis unfolded.

This includes how the use of case studies emerged during the course of my analysis. Thus whilst it has been necessary to focus on the more formal and planned aspects of doing research this belies the extent to which the research is underpinned throughout by inductive analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER PATTERNING AND CLASSIFICATIONS OF ECONOMIC CRIME

(i) Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to provide a succinct introduction to the gender patterning of crime and to move further towards a classification of women's economic crimes following on from the discussion in Chapter Two. In particular, I briefly demonstrate the gender patterning of crime using official data sources. Despite the well-documented problems with over-relying upon such sources generally within criminology, in this instance the persistent gender patterns shown by various ways of measuring and documenting crime patterns and trends point towards a broadly similar set of themes and traditions. The official data trends are thus taken as broadly indicative in terms of gender patterning. However, the problem of relying entirely upon official data sources cannot be so readily dismissed and the complex problems of definitions and classifications of women's economic crimes warrant much greater discussion from the outset.

This research focuses upon those activities that are likely to be located at the margins of the formal legal economy as well as those crimes that are more clearly defined as illegal. Whilst clearly labelled criminal activities feature in the illegal market place, other activities and behaviours also feature yet fall outwith official classifications of crime. There is a tradition within radical and critical criminologies that official classifications of crime are treated as inherently problematic.Whilst for some crime should be restricted to a legalistic definition (Tappan 1947), for others criminal

behaviour should include that which violates 'conduct norms' (Sellin 1938) and some argue it should also include that which violates human rights (Schwendinger and Schwendinger 1975). The aim here is to begin to identify activities that women do that fall within informal and criminal economies and to construct a working classification of 'economic crimes' as they apply to female offenders. In order to do this, I take specific account of official definitions, categories and classifications of economic and property crimes. Furthermore, I provide an indication of some of the key findings arising my interview data to help structure a working definition of economic crimes as they apply to female offenders.

(ii) The Gender Patterning of Crime

The most well known fact regarding differences between male and female offending is that women form only a small proportion of all known offenders. However, an examination of the official statistics reveals distinctive patterns in respect of female offending. At least two distinctive features arise. First, official statistics show distinctive patterns in the offences with which women are charged. A simple twenty-year comparison of official data is illustrative of general gender patterns trends and slightly deeper analysis shows some additional distinctive features worth noting.

Over twenty years ago, based on the criminal statistics for 1983 (Home Office 1983), women accounted for up to one fifth of the offenders involved in only two categories of crime:

- theft (20%) and
- fraud (21%)

The criminal statistics for 1999 (Home Office 1999) demonstrate a very similar pattern of offending. They account for just over one fifth of the offenders for:

- theft and handling of stolen goods (21%)

Women account for over a quarter of the offenders in the category of:

- fraud and forgery (28%)

This indicates a second distinctive feature; women appear much more restricted than men in their criminal involvements. Illustrating this point using the criminal statistics for 1983, for indictable offences the highest concentration of all offenders is in the theft category. This accounts for:

- 45% of men's crimes
- 72% of women's crimes

Women appear to specialise in this generic category as evidenced by a higher concentration of their crimes being thefts (Eaton 1986:17). For indictable offences the highest concentration of all offenders in 1999 continues to be in the category of theft. Theft accounts for:

- 36% of men's crimes
- 59% of women's crimes

Although women appear to continue to specialise in this generic category the statistics evidence a less marked concentration of offending than in 1983. The offence category of drug offences perhaps mostly accounting for this change with women comprising up to 12% of these such offenders in 1999 (Home Office, 1999) (drugs offences were not a separate category in 1983).

Women's participation in the full range of offence categories is maintained over time, and their involvement in crime on the whole continues to be proportionately much

lower than men's. However, as illustrated by offenders found guilty at all courts or cautioned by sex and type of offence (See Appendix 4), and persons found guilty at all courts or cautioned for indictable offences (See Appendix 5), the top four indictable offences for female offenders found guilty at all courts or cautioned in 1999 are as follows:

- theft and handling of stolen goods,
- drug offences,
- fraud and forgery
- violence against the person

With the proviso about drug offences, the patterns of offences for male and female offenders have remained largely unchanged since 1983.

However, these persistent and general gender patterns have tended to obscure other salient features concerning women's offending patterns. There are other specific offence categories to which women noticeably contribute. Burglary, violence and drugs offences cannot be too swiftly dismissed as important offence categories to which women contribute as the figures for sentencing also demonstrate. The top offences for women sentenced to custody in 1999 are shown in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Number of Women Sentenced to Custody by Top Offence Types, 1999

Offence type	No. of women sentenced to custody
Theft from shops	2,100
Fraud	470
Wounding	440
Production, supply and possession with intent to supply a Class A controlled drug	360
Summary motoring	350
Handling stolen goods	350
Burglary of all kinds	340

Source: Adapted from Home Office (2000) Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System.

In more detailed examination of the gender patterning of offending, additional distinctive features in respect of women's participation in the official offence categories emerges. When the generic category of theft and handling of stolen goods is further broken down into its more specific offence sub-types women's offending patterns become evenly more markedly distinct from men's. Women appear to become even more restricted and concentrated in their 'choice' of offence than men. In 1983 shoplifting accounted for 26% of theft offences by men, but 64% of theft offences by women (Eaton 1986: 18). In 1999 theft from shops accounted for 47% of theft offences by men, but consistent with the 1983 data 64% of theft offences by women (Home Office 1999). Appendix 6 shows defendants proceeded against at Magistrates' Courts by offence, sex and result for burglary, robbery, theft and handling stolen goods, fraud and forgery and drug offences. The data reveals women's restricted and concentrated participation in other offence categories holds to a similar pattern as thefts from shops although this is not nearly as marked for

offences other than theft and the proportion of women proceeded against at Magistrates Court's for specific categories of crime within the generic indictable offence listings is very small.

For men and boys, official data also demonstrates the age patterning of offending has proven significant and persistent over time. For women the data is less instructive. For women aged under 21 tried and/or sentenced at the Crown Court for all offences the numbers are so low in each offence category that analysis would not prove meaningful. For women aged 21 and over the proportion tried or sentenced remains small although a clear pattern of involvement emerges as described above. In 1999 the top offences for women aged 21 and over tried and/or sentenced at Crown Court are first fraud and forgery 22% (M 78%) whilst equal second is theft and handling of stolen goods 16% (M 84%) with drugs offences 16% (M 84%).

With greater overall numbers of women appearing before the magistrates at Magistrates Courts the data is worth closer inspection. For girls aged 10 and under 12, theft and handling of stolen goods which includes a range of thirteen specific Home Office classifications is the only offence category for which girls appear in significant numbers (Male 388, Female 60) girls accounting for 13% of offences in this category for this age group. More specifically theft from shops (Home Office classification Number 46) and theft from the person of another (H.O. No. 39) account for the largest numbers here.

For the remainder of the ages ranges the offence groups for which women and girls are proceeded against at Magistrates Courts can be ranked for each age range. This is shown in Table 4.2 below:

Table 4.2 Rank Ordering of Offence Groups for which Women and Girls are Proceeded Against at Magistrates Courts, 1999

	Age 12 and under 15	Age 15 and under 18	Age 18 and under 21	Age 21 and over
Violence Against the Person	2	2	2	4
Burglary	3	3	5	5
Robbery	5	6	7	7
Theft and Handling of Stolen Goods	1	1	1	1
Fraud and Forgery	6	4	3	2
Criminal Damage	4	5	6	6
Drug Offences	7	7	4	3

Key:

1= offence group to which women and girls contribute in greatest numbers

7= offence group to which women and girls contribute in smallest numbers

The offence category of 'theft and handling of stolen goods' ranks top for women and girls of all ages. For girls aged 12 and under 15 years old 'theft and handling of stolen goods' accounts for 32% of all the offences for girls in this age group. The offence category of 'violence against the person', the next largest category of offending for girls of this age, claims just 13% of this group's total share of offending trailing well behind the leading category.

For young women aged 15 and under 18 years 'theft and handling of stolen goods' accounts for 31% of all offences for girls in this group. As with girls under 15, the offence category of 'violence against the person' ranks second, claiming 10% of this

groups share of all offending. It is also interesting to note that twenty-two 15-18 year old girls were in court for the offence 'going equipped for stealing'.

For young women aged 18 - 21 once again 'theft and handling of stolen goods' is the top ranking offence category accounting for 22% of all this groups offending. The categories of 'violence against the person', 'fraud and forgery' and 'drug offences' follow in second, third and fourth place respectively. Each of these claims only a 3-4% share of total offending trailing well behind 'theft and handling of stolen goods'. Again, it is also interesting to note that twenty-three 18-21 year old girls were in court for the offence 'going equipped for stealing'.

Finally, for the vast age range 'women aged 21 and over' their offending patterns are spread more thinly across a range of offence categories. Nevertheless, the category of 'theft and handling of stolen goods' ranks highest with 9% of this groups share of offending. Trailing well behind this category are 'fraud and forgery', 'drug offences' and 'violence against the person'. Ninety-eight women were in court for the offence 'going equipped for stealing'.

As Table 4.2 shows, proportions of women and girls proceeded against at Magistrates' Courts are consistently highest for offences of 'theft and handling of stolen goods' and this is true of all age groups from 12 upwards. For those aged 12 – 21 years the next highest category of offending is 'violence against the person. Thereafter the pattern begins to change for each age group with the exception that proportions of women and girls proceeded against at Magistrates' Courts for 'drug

offences' are consistently the lowest for those aged 12 - 18. whereas for women aged 18 and over robbery ranks the lowest.

The official picture of female offending patterns justifies a particular research focus upon the offence groupings 'theft and handling of stolen goods' and 'fraud and forgery' for all ages, and 'drugs offences' for older female offenders. Having considered the gender and age patterning of offending and specific features of female offending patterns it is logical to continue exploring official vocabularies employed to distinguish between various offences as part of the task of classifying economic and property crimes.

(iii) Classifying the Economic Crimes of Women

According to the above, and commencing a gendered approach to the patterning of economic crime, the top three official classifications of crime as defined in the Criminal Statistics for England and Wales are theft and handling stolen goods in particular theft from shops (No 46) as well as, fraud and forgery and drug offences. Therefore according to official classifications and our knowledge of the patterning of female offending, the following generic offence categories (indicated in bold) are the key economic crimes for female offenders:

- **Theft and Handling Stolen Goods**

37.2 Aggravated vehicle taking
39 Theft from the person of another
40 Theft in a dwelling not automatic m/c or meter
41 Theft by an Employee
42 Theft or unauthorised taking from mail
43 Abstracting electricity
44 Theft from a vehicle

45 Theft from a shop
46 Theft from automatic machine or meter
47 Theft or unauthorised taking of motor vehicle
48 Other theft or unauthorised taking
54 Handling stolen goods
126 Vehicle interference and tampering

- **Fraud and Forgery**

51 Fraud by company directors etc.
52 False accounting
53a Cheque and credit card fraud
53b Other fraud
55 Bankruptcy and insolvency offences
60 Forgery or use of false drug prescription
61 Other forgery, etc.
814 Fraud, forgery etc. associated with vehicle or driver records

- **Drugs Offences**

92a Trafficking in controlled drugs
92b Possession of controlled drugs
92c Other drug offences

It is clear that the official glossary of terms for what might constitute economic crimes comprises various vocabularies and terminologies as well as technical ways of specifically codifying offence categories into Home Office classifications and numbers. Thus, even according to official documentation there are different ways of referencing crimes and these can include several forms of shorthand. According to official data sources thefts are significant and the statutory definition of theft is defined in the Theft Act of 1968 as '*the dishonest appropriation of another's property with the intention of permanently depriving the owner of it*'. Definitions of other key categories include fraud and forgery or 'obtaining by deception', false accounting, cheque and credit card frauds; theft and handling of stolen goods, theft from a shop, attempted theft, employee theft, snatch theft - an incident where force was used just to snatch property away from the victim and the victim was clearly aware of the incident as it happened - as opposed to stealth theft - thefts from the person which involve no force and the victim was not aware of what was happening (Simmons and Dodd

2003), drugs offences including trafficking, supplying and possession, benefit and welfare frauds, including false declaration to obtain benefits. Having examined official definitions, classifications and codifications of economic and property crimes, it is clear that women typically participate in certain sub-categories (41, 45, 53, 54 for example).

The above brings us only slightly closer to a clear and useful definition of what constitutes 'economic crimes' and what particular crimes for economic gain might be included in this generic category. At best the above leads to a definition of economic crimes that would certainly include theft and handling stolen goods, frauds and forgeries and drugs offences but it ought also to include most other varieties of property crime including burglary, robbery and some forms of car crime. Such crimes fall within the 'acquisitive' or 'instrumental' crime categories as generally recognised within criminology and as discussed in Chapter Two, as opposed to predominantly expressive crimes that might be committed due to reasons of boredom, rebellion and to some extent excitement. In respect of the limitations of the definitions so far examined from within sociology and criminology and officialdom it is clear that a variety of examples of criminal activity might fall within the generic grouping of economic crimes. A preliminary examination also reveals problems related to gender-based assumptions and that classification systems are unwieldy, woolly and vague and are either gender-specific or gender-neutral. The analysis so far demonstrates that a workable definition of economic crimes is becoming more complex and multifaceted than originally assumed.

Noticeably absent from the official listings and categorisations is any mention of shoplifting and prostitution or of the more typical vocabularies and common sense ways of referring to and representing the crimes that women specialise in. Indeed, prostitution related offending by women is well hidden in the generic official classification of 'Sexual Offences' and sub-category No 24 Procuration, which includes amongst other offences, living off earnings of prostitution. At the time of writing, women's offending as related to prostitution falls within the remit of the Sexual Offences Act 1956. However, the Sexual Offences Bill 2003 is currently making its way through Parliament [7] and, according to one recent critic, some of the clauses within this Bill suggest that adult prostitute women could be further criminalized and stigmatised, so too could female employees working on the peripheries of the sex trade (Brooks-Gordon, 2003). These changes might have the effect of inflating official offending rates of women in the future.

In Chapter Two, the extensive sociological/criminological literature and theorising that in effect has 'economic crimes' at its heart often fails to provide a clear definition of what actually constitutes economic crime. The economic crimes of women appear even more difficult to specify. The findings from my own research contribute to our understanding of what might constitute women's 'economic crimes'. They do so in two ways, first via observations and an examination of court listings at a magistrates' court and second, by examining the interview data.

Discussions with court-based probation staff, witness support co-ordinators and court ushers all confirm the paucity of female offenders facing the criminal courts with

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[7] Sexual Offences Bill, http://www.sexualoffencesbill.homeoffice.gov.uk/sexoffences-conresp.pdf

greater numbers routinely facing the locally so-called DSS and TV licence courts. The list of offences noted in Chapter Three clearly fall within official classification sub-categories of crime and demonstrate in a complementary way features concerning women's offending patterns as discussed above. Discussions, observations and interview data all remind us of women's specialist adaptations to doing crime and of the variety of offences to which they contribute. So far, the analysis confirms official portrayals of female crime but also demonstrates how broad generalisations obtained from national studies and statistics can mask the wider variety of offences with which women are charged.

My own interview data confirms women's specialisms in crime but also the varied range of offences to which they contribute. Twenty-one women in prison were interviewed. As Table 4.3 below illustrates, their imprisonable offences involve a combination of offences yet thefts dominate:

Table 4.3 Offences for which Women are Imprisoned

Offence	No
Arson,	1
Robbery	1
Burglary,	3
Thefts: shoplifting, fraud and deception, employee	15
taking a car without the owners consent	1
Handling stolen money	1
Drug trafficking/supplying	3
Public order	1
Criminal damage,	1
Perverting the course of justice	1
Breach of licence	1

Table 4.4 illustrates how those women interviewed in the community had similarly engaged in a range of offences that had recently brought them before the courts and how they too tended to show evidence of crime specialism.

Table 4.4 Offences for which Women Receive Probation

Offence	No
Burglary,	3
Theft: shoplifting, fraud and deception, employee	7
Handling stolen goods,	2
Supplying drugs	2
Smuggling,	2

Taken as a whole, the full sample indicates that the types of crimes the women had most recently been prosecuted for include shoplifting and thefts, fraud (including DSS fraud) and forgery, drugs related offences and burglary. This inevitably fits the patterning of female crimes as presented officially and documented in the previous section on the gender patterning of crime.

As with the official listings, the offences recorded above are not an accurate presentation of the full range of the women's criminal activities. They neither display the range of offences in which they participate nor the frequency. If a qualitative and appreciative study had not been undertaken this misrepresentation of the nature, extent and patterning of female offending, would lead to a serious under-representation of women's participation in several official crime categories as well as other illegalities, frauds and activities at the margins of the formal economy. Official criminal statistics are flawed data that provide a flawed snapshot and a misrepresentation of offending patterns.

In addition therefore, to the categories noted above we can add the following:

- Burglary
- Shoplifting
- TWOC

- Deception
- Handbag snatches
- Cheque frauds
- Credit card frauds
- DSS frauds
- Smuggling

As will become clearer in Chapters Five and Six of this thesis, even this longer list of offending terminologies under represents the range of deviant economic activities in which women regularly participate. Prostitution, as discussed in Chapter Two is the most obvious form of illegal work that women do. It is women's economic crime *par excellence* in that women get money directly for it. Official listings and prison and probation-based data all seriously understate the extent to which women engage in prostitution as most prostitutes receive fines (Phoenix, 1999). My own data is, therefore, also likely to under-represent the extent to which women more generally do prostitution as an economic crime and is more likely to represent shoplifting as women's economic crime par excellence. It is also worth noting however, that my prison sample data confirms women's offending patterns often include doing prostitution and also that drugs are impacting upon women's offending patterns. The complex ways in which they do this, however, are discussed further in the following chapters.

(iv) Conclusion

The attempt to define the 'economic crimes' of women is becoming more complex and multi-faceted. It is evident that different components of the criminological enterprise contribute to our knowledge and understanding, indeed to the definitional and classificatory complexities surrounding what constitute economic crime and

economic criminality. Although working definitions are usually necessary and appropriate for the purposes of research, it is clear that deriving a clear operational definition of economic crime and of clearly and simply distinguishing women's economic criminality has become a more central part of the research question. Whilst this may include taking account of official classifications, definitions and glossaries of crime, it may be more important to take account of the ways in which women articulate notions of the economic and to reserve decisions about tying myself to a singular definition or classification system. However, what is clear is that any working definition of crime for economic gain should be more inclusive of women and cannot remain gender-neutral. Chapter Five provides a demographic and contextual overview of the sample of women interviewed and their offending patterns as a precursor to a more detailed assessment of their motivations, explanations and justifications for doing crime in Chapters Six and Seven.

CHAPTER FIVE

OVERVIEW OF INTERVIEW DATA

(i) Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of some of the key characteristics of the sample. This information includes a general profile of the women including the women's pseudonyms, their ages at the time of interview, where they come from, their current/recent offence and sentence, their marital status and number of children, all presented according to the location of the interview (see Tables 5.1 and 5.2 below). Within this chapter I also give fuller portraits of approximately one third of the sample. These women are foregrounded in this remainder of chapter and throughout the next. They include women interviewed in prison and in the community who are between the ages of 17 and 46 years. Chapter Five also provides an overview of the women's offending patterns and profiles.

(ii) Characteristics of the Sample

All the women (26) are white and can loosely be described as working class. The majority (15) are in their 20s, although their ages range from 17 years to 47 years. Fifteen of the women have a total of 33 children between them with two of those pregnant again in prison. Some of the women live or lived with their children whilst other women's children are in care or looked after by supportive families. The areas the women come from, although geographically widespread, are addresses in areas

typified by council estate housing tenure or privately rented flats and accommodation in working class neighbourhoods in the north of England.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 provide summary information on the women interviewed. The tables distinguish between the women interviewed in prison and those interviewed in the community.

Table 5.1 The Prison Sample

No.	Name	Area	Age	Marital Status	No. of Children	Offence*	Sentence
1	Angela	Darlington	25	Single	3	Fraud & Deception	4 months
2	Brenda	Liverpool	28	Married	3	Burglary & Theft	15 months
3	Cathy	Hull	18	Single/ Boyfriend	0	Shoplifting	Remand
4	Claire	Byker	40's	Boyfriend	0	Employee Theft	6 months
5	Elizabeth	Hull	21	Boyfriend	0	TWOC+	Remand
6	Emily	Saltburn	17	Partner	1	Burglary, Arson	Remand
7	Helen	Liverpool	29	Single	0	Shoplifting+	8 months
8	Jane	Hull	25	Boyfriend	0	Burglary	Remand
9	Janet	Newcastle	25	Boyfriend	1	Theft	6 months
10	Joanne	Darlington	28	Single	1	Shoplifting	Remand
11	Judith	Scarborough	22	Boyfriend	0	Fraud & Deception	9 months
12	Kate	Bradford	33	Partner	3	Shoplifting	3 months
13	Martine	Scarborough	23	Single	0	Shoplifting+	Remand
14	Olivia	Byker	22	Partner	1	Robbery	9 months
15	Pam	Darlington	46	Single	3	Employee Theft	2 years
16	Patricia	Newcastle	25	Single	1	Supplying	Remand
17	Phillippa	Blaydon	34	Married	4	Supplying Drugs	Remand
18	Rebecca	Chester	21	Single	0	Shoplifting	3 months
19	Sadie	Gateshead	18	Boyfriend	0	Handling	Remand
20	Sally	Sunderland	19	Single	0	Shoplifting	3months
21	Sarah	Hull	24	Single	0	Shoplifting	Remand

* = Offence for which currently detained

Table 5.2 The Community Sample

No.	Pseudonym	Area from	Age	Marital Status	No. of Children	Offence*	Sentence
1	Claudia	Newcastle suburb	47	Single	2	Shoplifting, Deception	Probation Volunteer
2	Deborah	Throckley	33	Partner	3	Smuggling Cigarettes	Probation
3	Maureen	Throckley	28	Married	3	Handling Stolen Goods	Probation
4	Natasha	Ferryhill	33	Partner	3	Shoplifting, Fraud+	None
5	Pauline	Newcastle suburb	23	Single	1	Shoplifting, Fraud+	Probation Volunteer

* = Most recent offence

By far the greatest proportion of all the women interviewed relied upon government social security payments as their main form of income. This type of income includes income support, child benefit, job seekers allowance and invalidity benefits. Only three of the women claimed to have recently had full-time jobs. Indeed the women's experience of formal sector work was negligible. As a proxy indicator of the level of their financial independence, the nature of their formal work experiences suggest generally low levels of remuneration from work. The women's formal sector work experience is summarised in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3 Formal Sector Work Experience

Name (age)	Type of Job
Angela (25)	None
Brenda (28)	None
Cathy (18)	None
Claire (45)	Retail trade
Claudia (40)	Guest house work, bar work, cleaning
Deborah (33)	None
Elizabeth (21)	Retail trade
Emily (17)	None
Helen (29)	Care assistant
Jane (25)	Hair salon manager, mobile hairdresser
Janet (25)	None
Joanne (28)	None
Judith (22)	Waitress, care assistant
Kate (33)	None
Martine (23)	Waitress and café work
Maureen (28)	None
Natasha (33)	Factory
Olivia (22)	None
Pam (46)	Social Services
Patricia (25)	Dental nurse, factory, nursing home, modelling, bar and nightclub, takeaway
Pauline (23)	Trainee Hairdresser
Phillipa (34)	Fish shop, factory, lollypop lady, care assistant, volunteer work in schools
Rebecca (21)	Waitress
Sadie (18)	MacDonalds
Sally (19)	None
Sarah (24)	None

Overall the sample best fits the 'women on welfare' (Cook 1987) description and in light of the women's formal sector work experience, few had the opportunity to commit crime at work of any description. They are less than powerful offenders (Pearce 1976) best placed to commit non-white-collar cheque and security frauds often classified as 'minor' or 'other frauds' (Levi 1994). Although a significant minority had recently experienced full-time jobs and many more had past experience of gainful legitimate employment, their employment CV's can only be described as

limited, and especially so in terms of financial reward. Thus, for the majority only 'petty frauds' feature in the variety of offences that the women had done and these include social security, welfare, benefit and housing frauds, as well as cheque and credit card frauds.

(iii) Sample Portraits

The broad descriptions and summaries noted above mask the women's very different individual and distinctive biographies. Outlined below are portraits of eight women described under their pseudonyms. One is from the community sample and seven are from the prison-based sample.

Cathy

Cathy was aged 18 when interviewed in prison and she comes from Hull. Cathy has a 26 year old boyfriend and has no children but has been pregnant three times and lost them. Cathy lives alone in a hostel and only has contact with her dad. Cathy describes herself and her boyfriend as heroin users. She has injected heroin for two years. Her primary source of income prior to coming into prison was crime.

Cathy has been on remand for three weeks for offences of shoplifting and for breaching bail. She has also just finished a twelve months sentence of which she served 7 months and got out last month. This is the fifth time she has been in prison. She has previously been in trouble for shoplifting, purse pinches, credit cards, prostitution, burglary dwelling, dealing and possession of cannabis.

Elizabeth

Elizabeth was aged 21 when interviewed in prison and comes from Hull. Elizabeth lives alone in a flat and has no children and no contact with her family. She has one brother and one sister but she doesn't see them or her mum. Elizabeth has a boyfriend who is out of the country. They have been together for five years. Her primary source of income prior to her imprisonment was £64 per fortnight Incapacity Benefit from the DSS (due to depression from her expensive amphetamine problem). She also rents a flat, has bills as well as food and clothes to buy. Entrance to nightclubs is also a cost as are the drinks she buys there. Elizabeth worked when she was 16 and was sacked at 18.

Elizabeth is currently on remand for the offences of TWOC, driving whilst disqualified and for having no insurance. She has been here for one week but has only been out of prison for 8 weeks having been in before for aggravated TWOC (a police chase) for which she served a 6 months sentence. Elizabeth is expecting to get a 12 months sentence. She has been in prison three times before and has been arrested and cautioned lots of times previously since the age of eleven years for a variety of offences including intent to supply cannabis 'for money', shoplifting, cars, violence, GBH/ABH, '*all for quick money*'.

Emily

Emily was aged 17 when interviewed in prison. Her home is in Saltburn, Middlesbrough where she lives with her partner who is working and who is on a good wage. Emily went to school and was at college on a word processing course prior to coming into custody. She was studying part-time to become a secretary. She is also in

receipt of £10 Child Benefit weekly as she has a boy who is nearly one who she claims she looks after herself. He is now with social services and she now sees him once every two months.

Emily has been on remand for 3 weeks for four burglaries, three incidents of criminal damage and three further offences of arson but has only been out three weeks after an eight months sentence. Her boyfriend is on remand in Northallerton and except for the burglaries she is co-accused with him. In addition to being twice imprisoned Emily has also been on remand and in Local Authority care three times previously. She has been arrested and cautioned 'loads of times' before and she also admits to having done 20-30 burglaries that she has not been caught for in the last year as well as other offences of theft, drug related offences, criminal damage, and assault.

Jane

Jane was aged 25 when interviewed in prison. She comes from Hull is single, has no children and sometimes lives at home with her mum and sometimes she lives in her boyfriend's flat. Jane has one younger brother. Jane has a City & Guilds in Hairdressing and at one time she managed a salon until the owner found out she was on drugs and she lost her job. She had her own mobile house-to-house business and a full time job in Hull. Her primary source of income prior to being imprisoned however was a job seekers allowance of £92.00 per fortnight.

Jane confesses to having been in trouble since she was aged 14 and on cannabis at the age of 15 or 16. Jane's offending history spans a period of seven years and she has been in and out of prison. Jane suggested that this is all related to drugs, '*for money*

for drugs. I'm an addict, cannabis, speed, heroin, crack cocaine.' Jane has now been on remand for five weeks for the offences of burglary, theft, handling and deception for which she expects to get a two years prison sentence. She has been in prison before four or five times and was last in this same prison four months ago.

Joanne

Joanne was aged 28 and described herself as single. She has one four-year-old son who is in foster care. He goes to nursery full time and he visits her in prison once a week. Joanne is six and a half months pregnant again whilst now in prison. Joanne originally comes from Darlington but now lives in Newcastle. Prior to coming into prison her primary source of income was Income Support. This amounted to a total of £68.00 plus £10.00 family allowance weekly.

Joanne has been imprisoned for offences of shoplifting. She is currently on remand for these offences and has been for 7 weeks. On this and previous occasions she has been caught for shoplifting, mostly for clothes and for stuff for the kids from Adam's and Littlewoods but also for drink, for whisky for herself. She told me she had been in the same prison four years ago when pregnant and has been in and out of this and other prisons over the last 10 years. In addition to this remand centre/prison she has been in Styal, and Askham Grange's mother and baby unit.

Judith

Judith was aged 22 when interviewed in prison. Judith comes from Scarborough and had lived with her boyfriend prior to coming into prison. She has no children but has had 3 miscarriages and one ectopic pregnancy. Judith describes herself as not in work,

unemployed and living with her boyfriend, as having had a drug habit – she injects heroin - for 7 years. This habit costs her £200 a day.

The offences for which Judith has this last time been imprisoned are fraud and deception. These are credit card related. She is co-accused with a male offender who is serving a three years prison sentence. Her current sentence is for 9 months and she is due to get out next March (1998). She has been in prison before the first time when aged 16 for shoplifting and assault. She has been arrested/cautioned 15 times or so previously for shoplifting but has carried out several hundred more such offences for which she has never been caught. She has also done some social security frauds on some seven occasions, making £80 each time and has not been caught for them. She also admits to having dealt in heroin.

Pam

Pam was aged 46 when interviewed in prison and she comes from Darlington. Pam is now single but she had a boyfriend prior to coming into prison. She has three children and her eldest boy is nineteen years old. Pam had been employed full-time by social services prior to her imprisonment.

Pam has almost completed a 2 years' sentence and is due to leave prison in one and a half weeks. Pam's prison sentence is for theft of approximately £1200 from her employers, the social services.

Pauline

Pauline was aged 23 when interviewed at the probation centre. Similar to her older friend Claudia, Pauline described herself as a 'probation volunteer'. Having previously served probation sentences and having been part of women's groups as part of these orders she continued to attend despite her period of probation apparently having expired. Pauline comes from a suburb of Newcastle and has one four year old daughter who goes to a nursery and is looked after by her mum when Pauline is at college four days a week where she is training to be a hairdresser. Pauline has a privately rented and furnished flat and relies on Income Support as a source of income. Pauline had been in a relationship with a man who was 28. They had been living together in her flat and were both on benefits.

Pauline has spent a short time on remand previously and has also spent time at a bail hostel. She has also had various community sentences including variations of Probation Order, as well as Community Service and fines having been in trouble previously for shoplifting, benefit book and credit card frauds.

(iv) Offending Patterns and Profiles: Overview

The crimes that the full sample of women were most frequently engaged in, as illustrated in Tables 5.1, 5.2, 5.4 and 5.5 and more thoroughly evidenced during interviews, were thefts, in particular shoplifting, fraud and deception but also employee and car theft. Burglary, drugs and prostitution-related offences also figured significantly in the offending profile of the sample whilst a number of other offences were also included in the range of crimes the women had committed. These women would generally be characterised as '*hustlers*' (Campbell, 1991; Maher, 1997). The

women are economically marginal and are committing what some have called '*petty offences*' (Steffensmeier and Allen, 1996). Nevertheless, crime appears to constitute a major source of income for many of these women.

The women's most recent 'official' known crimes are indicted in Chapter Four, Tables 4.3 and 4.4. For both samples a combination of offences are noted and each of these are included in the tables. All but one of the women is currently serving some kind of sentence of the court or a court order. Dispositions range from being remanded in custody and awaiting trial, prison sentences ranging from 3 months to 2 years and probation supervision with a day centre attachment.

Common findings from both data sets are evident from detailed descriptions of the types of crimes that women routinely commit. The crimes the women are most often engaged in and therefore talked about their experiences of, are shoplifting and thefts, fraud (including DSS fraud) and forgery, prostitution, drugs related offences and burglary. Inevitably this is a very similar pattern of crimes committed by females as presented officially.

The women's most recent offending patterns and profiles reveal a common experience of having engaged in a range of offences. The most frequently mentioned criminal offence is theft, in particular shoplifting. Judith (22 years) told me why she was currently in prison:

Fraud and deception and theft. I was co-accused with one lad who is doing three years..... for chequebook frauds, 10 offences, 5 were TIC'd. 2 thefts, shoplifting from shops, retail, -------, ----------, for children's clothes....(Judith)

Judith admitted to having about thirty-five shoplifting convictions and to having committed a further hundred or so for which she had not been caught. In 1996 fifteen of her cheque frauds were detected. Judith has carried out social security frauds on some seven occasions, making £80 each time. These offences have never been detected. She also took part in a pub burglary and an offence of taking a car without the owner's consent. As indicated in her profile, Judith also admitted to dealing in heroin.

A selection of the other responses demonstrates the typicality of this involvement in a variety of offences, always featuring thefts related to shoplifting offences with some women engaging in thefts of a specialist nature. At the age of twenty-one Elizabeth admitted to having been involved in crimes of shoplifting, violence GBH and ABH whilst currently being detained for driving without the owner's consent, driving whilst disqualified and driving without vehicle insurance. Emily (17) also listed several offences that she had been in trouble for previously including assault, burglary, criminal damage, thefts and drug related offences. Jane (25), on remand, told me how her offending career escalated to burglaries and theft, handling and deception: '*it used to be passing stolen cheques and petty theft*'. Janet (25), serving a six-month sentence for handbag thefts, had been imprisoned on more than one occasion for thefts, shoplifting and passing stolen cheques. Janet describes how she specialized in handbag thefts from hospital casualty areas whereas Cathy (18) tended to specialize in

'*purse pinches*' and credit cards. All of those named above admitted to having engaged in many more crimes, especially shoplifting offences than became officially known to the police.

Though sex work is not a common feature of the women's 'official' offending patterns several women made observations about prostitution and four of the sample admitted they had been personally involved in prostitution. Those commenting on prostitution generally saw it as a way of making money but claimed they preferred shoplifting.

A small minority of the women interviewed claimed to have been involved in a limited range of offences. Their experience of crime had been of a more specialised nature and they tended to work with close family or partners. Maureen (28) and Deborah (33), both interviewed in the community, were involved in crime in this way. Maureen describes how she was arrested along with her boyfriend and brother, whilst Deborah and her boyfriend teamed up with another couple:

Three years ago I was arrested for conspiracy to steal and ring stolen cars, with about 20 other people. ..... Five were in court. There was me and four men. I filled in the forms for the logbooks. (Maureen)

.....for smuggling cigarettes into the country. 63,000 Regal King Size, we didn't declare them. We took empty suitcases to ------- and brought them back full in order to sell them on for money. (Deborah)

Both in their mid to late forties Pam and Claire were interviewed in prison. White-collar criminals do not form the majority of our prison population and in women's prisons white-collar or frilly-cuff (Goldstraw 2002) offenders are an insignificant minority. Pam and Claire's crimes are more specialised and restricted than the remainder of the sample. They were committed at their workplaces; as such they might be considered blue-collar, occupational crimes. Such varieties of female crime are little understood as there is scant information and criminological theorising on them (Croall 2001, Goldstraw 2002, Weisburd et al. 2001). Pam, a forty-six year old mother of three worked full-time in a social services job and was imprisoned for theft of approximately £1200 from her employer. For this offence she was serving a two year prison sentence. Claire, also in her mid 40's stole drugs from the pharmacy she worked in. Like Pam, Claire claimed not to have been in trouble before.

Sutherland (1949) defined white-collar crime as: *'..a crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his occupation'* (Sutherland 1949: 9) and as Croall (2003) has recently pointed out, in Sutherland's day such crime could readily be associated with men as few women were to be found in occupational positions of high social status. Gender questions about the extent to which white-and blue collar crime is men's or women's business must remain speculative however as these women's offending patterns may not be sufficiently representative and their criminality is insufficiently thoroughly explored in my own research to allow for a more detailed analytical case study of their motivations to do white-collar crime. Pam at least is not untypical of the female fraudster who tends to be engaged in low-level clerical fraud (Levi 1994).

Although the nature, extent and range of offending in which the women had been involved is varied and extensive, it is apparent that all of the women have engaged in a form of theft and that with one exception they have one offence in common, namely shoplifting. Shoplifting is the offence in which women appear to participate most frequently and this holds true whether they engage in shoplifting as a solitary effort or in partnership with other males or females. One of the young women interviewed by Campbell neatly captures this apparent 'criminal girl' equivalent of boys being boys:

'My thing would be shoplifting and cheques and the lads would burgle warehouses' (Campbell 1993:214). Campbell also notes that for older females *'grafting is women's work'* (1993:22). The majority of the women I interviewed appear identical to Campbell's (1993) exemplars. Her female informants do *'the work of the ghetto'*, characteristically their offences are stealing or *'survival offences'*.

Six of the sample admitted to having recently been directly or jointly involved in household burglaries nevertheless their most prevalent crime is shoplifting and this offence feature most strongly in their long term offending patterns. If burglary and robbery typically present opportune avenues for aspiring professional boys and men, shoplifting appears to be the female equivalent. If doing crime, particularly violent, serious and professional property crime is men and boys business (Hobbs 1988, 1995, Newburn and Stanko 1994), then my interview data and the gender patterning of women's offending suggests that shoplifting as well as prostitution is women's business. Shoplifting and prostitution does for women and girls what burglary does for men and boys. Thus, it is appropriate to consider the women's motivations for doing shoplifting in similar ways to men and boys' motivations for doing burglaries. This forms a part of the analysis in the following chapters.

(v) Drug Related Crime

Significant differences between the data sets of the prison and community sample related to drug usage. Table 5.6 below lists those women who admitted to alcohol and/or illicit drug abuse being a factor in contributing to their criminality. All sixteen of these women were interviewed in the prison setting.

Table 5.6 Women Admitting to Alcohol/Illicit Drug Abuse

Name (age)	Drug/s Involved
Angela (25)	Amphetamines
Brenda (28)	Heroin, cocaine
Cathy (18)	Heroin
Elizabeth (21)	Drink, amphetamines,
Emily (17)	Drink and drugs
Helen (29)	Heroin, cocaine
Jane (25)	Cannabis, speed, heroin, crack cocaine
Janet (25)	Heroin
Joanne (28)	Drink
Judith (22)	Heroin
Kate (33)	Drugs
Martine (23)	Heroin
Patricia (25)	Heroin
Pauline (23)	Drink
Rebecca (21)	Heroin
Sarah (24)	Heroin

Drugs offences appear to have been in part responsible for the recent minor upsurge in the female prison population (see Chapter Four). The women forming the prison sample confirm that drugs significantly affect women's offending patterns in the late twentieth century. This appears to occur in two ways. As Chapter Six goes on to explore, women are committing 'economic crimes' to finance their own and others

personal drug habits. Some women are also committing drugs offences as 'economic crimes' in their own right as Tables 4.3 and 4.4 show. Whilst this chapter is principally concerned with outlining what women do as regards types of crimes committed, the following chapters are more concerned with why and how women do their crimes. Whilst drugs variously appear to impact upon the women's offending patterns and motivations these connections are further explored alongside other motivations and justifications in the next chapter.

(vi) Conclusion

This chapter has provided an overview of what criminal women do in terms of crime and offending. Whilst their versatility is demonstrated in this respect, and prostitution and drug related crimes feature amongst their offending histories, their specialist activities are also demonstrated and in this respect theft, in particular shoplifting, dominates the patterning and frequency of their crimes. Also indicated is the solitary nature of some of the women's offending characteristics whilst others do crime in close proximity to other women and other men as offenders. These features of women's lives together with the women's relationships to their families and children and their familial responsibilities are also shown as key to their circumstances and appear likely to have a significant impact upon their offending. Thus the signposts arising from within this overview of some of the key characteristics of the sample and their offending patterns and profiles strongly points towards shoplifting as a key 'economic crime' worth further investigation. It also points towards the need to further explore the connections between drugs and crime, as well as economic and familial circumstances and relations generally. Whilst this chapter has particularly

explored *what* crimes women do, Chapter Six focuses more specifically on *why* women do their crimes of choice and *how* they do them.

CHAPTER SIX

WOMEN AND CRIME FOR ECONOMIC GAIN

(i) Introduction

This chapter explores key themes emerging from the data. Whilst Chapter Five was primarily concerned to provide an overview of the key characteristics of the sample and this specifically included an overview of the nature and extent of women's criminality, that is what crimes women do, this chapter is more concerned to explore criminological questions of why women do economic crimes and how they do their crimes of choice. The questions of why and how women do crime are almost inextricably linked so that motivations are often linked to the particular means of carrying the offence and vice versa. As outlined in Chapter Three, two criminological questions pertinent to the examination of women's motivations to do crime are considered. The first is the extent to which women's criminality can be recognized in 'economic' or 'economy' terms as demonstrated in their crime talk. Are women talking in something akin to 'economy' terms? How do women articulate their crime stories and do their vocabularies use or include economic language? This chapter seeks to make some preliminary assessments about the ways in which women's criminality might be described as 'economic'. The second criminological question is whether women emerge as economic agents in their own right. In this chapter therefore I make some initial observations about why and how women do crime for economic gain and whether or not economic or rational action is discernable.

The findings presented in this chapter begin to examine and demonstrate how the women do their principal crimes of choice. There is a particular focus - as the data suggests the analysis ought - on shoplifting and on the different reasons, justifications and motivations the women give for this crime. There is also a particular focus on the connections between the shoplifting or 'grafting' habits of professional shoplifters and drug use as for those women interviewed in prison their personal drug habit clearly compromises and complicates their offending patterns.

(ii) Grafting (How)

> *Videos and stereos exchange hands at pubs – or are just a form of 'shopping' as one group member called his burglaries. Watches, antiques and jewellery were often bought by seemingly respectable people, including professionals. They of course, sustain the market for burglary.*
>
> (Graef 1993: 143)

As indicated in the quotation above and further discussed in Chapters Two and Eight, for boys and men burglary constitutes illegal shopping. The gender patterning of offending as illustrated in Chapter Four suggests specific types of thefts constitute the equivalent official crime categories for women and girls. My own research also confirms and provides further detail on the gender patterning of crime and offending. Shoplifting or 'grafting' was a clear and consistent feature of the offending patterns described by the women. This was an activity that they carried out alone and with others, often for their own benefit as well as their boyfriend, partners and families. Many of the women described their shoplifting as a routine activity. Indeed, for some

it had become a normal part of their everyday lives. For Pauline (23) shoplifting was a solitary activity. She told me:

I was grafting from day to night getting anything to sell.....Typical day in 1994 I'd be up at 9am, I'd have a bath, do my hair, be ready for 10-10.30am. I'd say 'I'm away grafting today'. I'd make money and be back by 4pm. (Pauline)

Encouraging the women to elaborate upon how they carried out their shoplifting activities I asked the women to '*Tell me a little bit more about the shoplifting'*. Judith described how she shoplifted:

.....I always took a bag and an extra change of clothing. I targeted easy shops, outside -------,------- and -------, ---------- - the outskirts. I travelled by train or bus..... The change of clothes was for disguise I'd change in a pub if I thought I'd been seen. I changed my hair and my appearance.....I'd take £4-500 of clothes in one go. Sometimes I'd go back to the same shop two minutes or an hour later and do it again. I had friends close by; I'd put stuff in their house. I'd have carrier bags from ----------and bin liners. I grabbed racks.....Went to Supermarkets for cigarettes and alcohol.------, --------, --------,---------. Each go I'd get 400 cigarettes each time and £100 of spirits, Whisky, Vodka, Bacardi - the dearest. I'd get orders from people for specific things and from specific people,..... (Judith)

PD: What would a typical order be?

Four hundred fags, two bottles of whisky, two bottles of vodka, £15.99 per bottle each

(Judith)

Judith visited supermarkets for certain goods whereas Helen (29) clearly preferred to concentrate her shoplifting at these big superstores:

...supermarkets just. They sell clothes and everything the whole lot in one shop it saves getting about and I mean they have shop watch don't they and they can start blowin through.....One big supermarket ---------it was easier to get out with the trolleys .....Meat, coffee, clothes, toiletries, anything worth taking. Mostly spirits cos you get more like a bottle of spirits you get paid £10 for (Helen)

Whilst Judith and Helen stole to order and took *'anything worth taking'*, Olivia (22) and Kate (33) preferred clothes shops because, as Olivia claims, clothing is the most lucrative product to sell on:

It's the easiest things to sell cos people buy them straight away. Dress clothes to go out in, named clothes from--------, ------, people buy straight away. .....--------s and ----are expensive so like when your selling stuff you're getting half price - good money all the time. (Olivia)

Helen describes how she would shoplift with her brother and her boyfriend at the big supermarkets:

I'd go into a supermarket, my brother and me with a trolley each with the same items and we'd leave one and take the first out together, he'll pull it and I'd push it and

once we'd got it in the car we'd go back and do the other one, and keep going back.....

In-------, --------, -------, for bottles of spirits and trolleys full of coffee, clothes, meat, the whole trolley to sell.--------, ---- and---------, supermarkets. I'd never buy anything. I'd go in with the trolley and go back to the door I came in by near the fruit and veg, and walk out with the trolley to a waiting car with my brother and with the lad I'd been doing it with. They also had a trolley and we carried on until it was a bit on top - people getting on to us..... They liked to have a girl with them in the shop that way we'd look like a couple going out shopping..... I shoplifted every day four to five times a day. I'd start early in the morning to get enough to get our gear to get back out again in the afternoon. (Helen)

Helen's dialogue accentuates the routine of grafting and emphasizes how shoplifting has come to dominate many of these young women's lives. Helen's accomplices had homed in on the gendered nature of shopping '*...They liked to have a girl with them in the shop that way we'd look like a couple going out shopping...* ' and used this as a way of enhancing their skill at avoiding detection.

Olivia also describes how she usually also worked with someone else:

a girlfriend or boyfriend, two people. We'd go in and we'd have money with us to buy something, we'd watch for people looking and then take it, we'd have a big bag with us - sometimes a foil bag - we'd take stuff and go around and buy things and pay for them and walk out. Sometimes we'd de-tag things but not if we had a foil bag. We'd

pull off the tags. The other person would be lookin out, walkin round with - just watchin out. (Olivia)

Brenda (28), a prolific shoplifter worked alone in some instances and with another female on other occasions. Like Olivia she would have a big bag filled with foil to avoid the security detectors. She would target any shop and would take anything but she preferred ----------where she would work with another woman:

they have good underwear and that and it would go easy, people would want it……..-

---------for the ale – spirits……..----------: for spirits I'd go alone. I'd fill a trolley up and walk through the till with meat as well up to £800 worth in the trolley and then go to the car and stock it up and then go back another couple of times.

, ……In -----there'd be two of us and we'd go in separately. I'd fill a foil bag up with underwear and leave it in such a place and she'd walk out with it. If someone clocks me putting them in they've got nothing on me. (Brenda)

Like the majority of the shoplifting specialists Olivia told me how she would plan and organise her shoplifting activities in advance:

I'd ger up when me friend knocked at the door. Decide where we were gonna go either close to….Road or ….. or town – city centre. If we were goin to…. Road we'd walk. If we were goin down town we'd get the bus or metro. We just walked around and went into the first shop together and then one shoplifted or was watchin. We walked around until we had enough stuff really. (Olivia).

In elaborating upon their shoplifting exploits and how best to graft, the women not only clearly indicated their preferences for certain retail stores and products, they also emphasised their skills, expertise and particular *modus operandi*. Judith *'always took a bag and an extra change of clothing'*. Olivia knew which products were the best sellers in the illegal marketplace, whereas Helen, Brenda, Natasha, Pauline and Kate demonstrated how this routine activity of shoplifting had indeed become hard graft, a job for which they would travel the country:

----------I'd done about four shops and I was on the way down to the train station and I went into --------and I was caught on camera and stopped at the door. I'd travelled to ----------to shoplift on the train on my own. I rarely went with anyone else.....(Kate)

Brenda worked in company with another shoplifter employing a driver who was paid from the proceeds of their joint shoplifting trips. Martine's (23) shoplifting operated in a similar way.

PD: Where would you shoplift?

All over everywhere, ---------- and we'd travel to....---------- only down the road, ----------, ----------in a car. We'd have a driver who'd get paid for taking us. What he'd get paid depends on what we made - get say, if we got 1 grand he'd get £200. In the car there'd be me mate (female) and a regular driver (male). We'd go a day shoplifting trip everyday. (Brenda)

In ----------and out of town, ----------, ----------, -----and the villages, ---------, ----------, ----------everywhere in a friend's car or on the train. I'd pay the driver of the car (usually a man) pay him petrol and give him whatever at the end of the day. £10 to £15 for petrol and a couple of pairs of jeans and a jumper or spirits, three bottles of Martel Brandy, £25 a bottle plus his petrol out of thirty-odd bottles all bulk. (Martine)

Brenda and Martine travelled to shoplift, often organizing a car driver who would be paid for their day's contribution. Similarly Pauline told me:

I'd pay a lad to drive £20.00 per day. (Pauline)

As a particular form of theft, customer theft or shoplifting can be executed in a variety of ways. The most popular method appears to be by physically taking the goods without intending to pay for them but other methods are also described and amongst these are theft by means of fraud and forgery. Pauline, a probation volunteer, had extensive experience of several varieties of frauds and forgeries including benefit books, cheque card and cheque book frauds. In the instances of benefit books:

I'd cash these at the Post Office. Buy them in bars when I was allowed out one night a week for £10 in a pub. They'd range from £40-£50 or £70-£80 cash. (Pauline)

And in the instances of Check Card and Books:

I'd buy them for £15.00 in pubs from men I knew who to go to. I'd buy spirits or clothes to sell to one seller. Clothes from BHS, Littlewoods, C&A. I'd keep a couple of tops but the majority I'd sell. Take orders for people i.e. a drill and sell them it for half price. I'd also just buy stuff and sell it. I'd get stuff from Newcastle, Sunderland, South Shields - by car, I'd pay a lad to drive £20.00 per day. (Pauline)

Helen describes how her shoplifting included cheque book and card frauds:

I went to Bournemouth when I was 16 and I was shoplifting there for drugs. There were some lads and loads of girls doing it for them and they asked me if I would do it - cheque books and cards. They'd get them and bring them to me and I'd go out straight away and get what they asked me to get - usually clothes (Helen)

PD: to order?

yeah from chain stores, jeans shoes, trainers and that. I'd pick the stuff and then go up and use the cheque cards as if they were me own. I'd copy their signature on the card, I'd practice before I'd go out. A few times they got suspicious and I left the shop. There's a fifty pound limit on cheques but sometimes I had ID to go with it and I showed the extra ID so that I could go over fifty pound. I'd do a whole cheque book - use all the cheques - it would take one or two days. If I was caught for one I was caught for them all. If they'd just got it that day I'd use it before it was reported. I didn't really like doing that, I preferred shoplifting - you're more in control with it. I'd get half of the stuff they'd sold from orders and I'd get clothes for myself on it.

(Helen)

Whilst many of the women had experience of conducting forms of fraud and forgery this was not generally their preferred means of shoplifting from the retail sector. Additionally, whilst the majority of the women preferred to specialise in shoplifting as work or 'graft', a significant minority also engaged in prostitution in a similarly planned, committed and organised way. Cathy told me how she had worked as a prostitute for three years and Kate's experiences of prostitution are even more extensive spanning a much longer period of time. Over the years she 'worked' in several major towns and cities.

Customer theft is more commonly and simply referred to by the women as 'grafting' and thus shoplifting clearly emerges as an 'economic crime' in several ways. The official categorization of customer theft has been transposed in routine parlance to shoplifting, a recognizable activity in its own right. In turn this colloquialism has also been transposed again so that within the criminal sub-culture the preferred vocabulary is that of 'grafting'. Grafting is daily work, in some instances apparently even an enterprise, a business activity. Similarly prostitution is work and the women's grafting talk reveals the routine aspect of their participation in such activities and the determination and planning and organisation that goes into the committal of their crimes in order to maximize their rewards. Their talk also reveals a variety of different means and preferences in relation to the commission of their offences. Specialisms, choices and stated preferences appear to demonstrate how the women think in advance about their shoplifting practices. This is evidenced in how they plan their days, how they select their targets, how they prefer to take some goods as opposed to others, how they learnt new skills and how they avoid detection through

using tools of the trade to escape being caught by security measures and technological equipment. The women talk about shoplifting as an ordinary activity and describe it as part of their everyday lives. It is what they do for a living, and to a great extent for some it is how they survive from day-to-day, week-to-week. Their criminal work parallels many aspects of legal occupations and the working lives of those semi-professional and professional people doing such work.

These accounts and stories do not appear to bear the hallmarks of women's submissiveness. Rather than showing a lack of resistance or a resignation to the inevitability of their plight, they appear to me to be convincing and credible stories of some women who, faced with a limited range of choices, do illegal shopping. Within their clearly economically marginalized and often impoverished lives, the women are talking about their active participation and individual resistance through grafting.

Customer theft is emerging not only as an 'economic' crime but it is beginning to raise several interesting questions about women's understanding and appreciation of 'the economic' more generally. This only serves to emphasise the loose understanding, appreciation and usage of the notion of 'economic crime' particularly in relation to female offending patterns. Likewise, it seems the notion of 'the economic' in relation to women doing crime is perhaps becoming more complex and multi-faceted than existing criminological theorizing suggests.

(iii) Professional Aspects of Women's Criminality

Those involved in the prevention, detection and prosecution of offenders often differentiate between opportunists, amateurs and professionals and in the case of

customer theft and shoplifting, similar distinctions are often made (Home Office 1990a, Butler 1994). Criminologists have also categorised different types of offenders as opportunists, amateurs, professionals and semi-professionals. Pat Carlen has analysed women's criminality in this manner, illustrating the professional aspects of women's criminal careers (Carlen 1988). Offenders also distinguish between different types of offenders in the same way, deeming some shoplifters more professional in the way they approach and conduct their criminal offences than others (Butler 1994). Towards the close of my own interview schedule one question specifically related to the degree of professionalism involved in the commission of crime. However, the degree of professionalism attached to their offending emerged more clearly through the women's detailed descriptions of how they executed their activities and my follow up questions elicited more information on this too.

Carlen defines professional crime as,

> *'Law-breaking pursued in a systematic and organised way (either alone or with others) for the primary purpose of providing the woman's major source of income during and extended period of time (even though arrest might cut short the projected time span)'*
>
> (Carlen 1988:59).

She therefore draws attention to the mode of operation in relation to specific types of activities/offences namely burglary, shoplifting, cheque fraud, prostitution/soliciting, sexual services/keeping a brothel.

Carlen's definition of professionalism in the context of women's crime is useful to my analysis. Several of the women fall into the category of professional, either as a shoplifter, prostitute, fence or drug dealer. For example, Judith described herself as a professional shoplifter, whereas Patricia saw herself as a professional dealer (drugs) – *'dealing was my profession'*. Maureen might be represented as a professional in that she had engaged in criminal activity over a protracted period of time and along with approximately 20 others. Although, she was adamant that *'it wasn't a big organised business, it was more loosely knit'*. Cathy described her primary source of income as crime and several women referred to themselves professional criminals. Claudia told me she was known as Claudia *'the stocktaker'* and was known as a professional in her field. Like Natasha she said of shoplifting, theft and deception, '*To me it was just a job*'. Detailed case studies of Claudia and Natasha as professional shoplifters are provided in Chapter Seven. However, adopting Carlen's (1988) definition of professional and borrowing her tabular methods of presentation, the professional aspects of the samples of criminality are illustrated here.

Table 6.1 Professional Aspects of Women's Criminality

Name (age)	Type of activity/crime	Mode of Operation
Angela (25)	Shoplifting	To sell on Took orders from customers
Cathy (18)	Burglary, shoplifting, prostitution, credit card frauds	Stole to order, Sold goods on, Had a pimp and engaged in prostitution over three year period
Claudia (47)	Shoplifting, thefts, deceptions	Known as a professional Stole goods to order for customers Worked alone Specialised in certain goods Had a pricing policy
Deborah (33)	Smuggling	As a couple and with another couple Pre-planned trips travelled abroad 3 times
Elizabeth (21)	Shoplifting, TWOC	With other lads and girls Linked into receivers' network
Emily (17)	Burglary (creeps), shoplifting	With group of 4-5 men Had criminal customers
Jane (25)	Shoplifting and handling, burglary, deception	With other males Purchased stolen cheques
Janet (25)	Handbag snatches shoplifting, cheque frauds	In hospital casualty areas Travelled by car around the country Purchased stolen cheques
Judith (22)	Shoplifting, fraud and deception	Took orders Used scanners Worked in a gang of male and female shoplifters 'Never took one item always loads' Took extra bags and change of clothing Travelled to local towns Stored goods at friends house
Maureen (28)	Handling stolen goods	With approx 20 others
Natasha (33)	Shoplifting, thefts, deceptions	Known as a professional Took orders and sold goods for customers Worked alone/recruited and worked with others Had a pricing policy
Patricia (25)	Shoplifting, drug dealing and supplying	Has drug dealers equipment Records of debts

		Opened up shops Had regular customers Operated as a fence
Pauline (23)	Shoplifting, benefit books, cheque books and cards	All as a daily activity Bought books and cards from criminals Took orders for goods Had a pricing policy Paid a driver
Sadie (18)	Shoplifting	Took half racks of clothes at a time Travelled alone/with friends by car/public transport Stole to order Had a pricing policy
Sally (19)	Prostitution, burglary, shoplifting	Committed crimes over a period of 6 years every day With others on foot or by car, Sold to a fence Operated with others, Stole to order, Had a pricing policy
Sarah (24)	Drug dealing shoplifting	With other men With one other girl every day, Full racks of good quality clothes Travelled by car to different large towns

Table 6.1 (cont.) Professional Aspects of Women's Criminality

Clearly the broader criminological literature has addressed the notion of professional and organised crime and has long debated the questions of how professional crime might best be defined and illustrated. These issues are explored in more detail and are subjected to a gendered critique in Chapters Two and Eight. The above however, serves to demonstrate how working class women's criminality manifests features of professionalism. These features complement the limited data available, particularly that derived from the empirical research of Carlen whose material referred to above was published over 16 years ago in 1988.

In terms of furthering my inquiries about what constitutes 'economic crime' for women, about the gendered nature of property related offending and about women's

agency as indicated via evidence of rationalism, this illustration of various professional aspects of women's criminality is useful. It complements the previous assessment of how women do their crimes (of choice) and it also complements my previous assessment of why they do such crimes. It demonstrates that the why and how questions are linked and suggests that the purpose, reason or justifications for the offending impacts upon how the crime is carried out. The more urgent and necessary the women feel the doing of crime is, it would appear the more organised, businesslike and professional their offending and ways of doing crime becomes. In terms of understanding and appreciating women's crimes and offending there may be very tangible results from further exploring these connections. Increased appreciation and understanding of the 'why women do crime question' increases the potential for developing ways of truncating and preventing further crimes and victimisations.

(iv) Motivations (Reasons/Explanations/Justifications) for Offending (Why)

In terms of exploring how far the women's crimes can be described as economic, and to some extent how far women are economic agents in their own right, their explanations and justifications for their shoplifting are extremely telling. None of the women had any difficulty voicing reasons for their law breaking. They freely described the circumstances in which they committed their crimes as well as justifications or 'explanations' for them. In response to my follow up *'Why did you do this?'* A variety of reasons were immediately mentioned including money, drugs, men and other people and children (See Table 6.1).

Table 6.1: Reasons/Justifications for Lawbreaking

Immediate reason for lawbreaking	Number of women giving these reasons
Desire for more money[8]	21
Drugs[9]	17
Relationship with a man	9
Alcohol problem	4
Mixing with people involved in crime	5
Clothes for the kids	2
Family's lifestyle	1

An overwhelming 84% of the total sample mentioned 'money' amongst their immediate reasons for lawbreaking. However, each of the other reasons such as drugs and alcohol, relationship with a man, clothes for the kids could also be linked to monetary requirements be that for financial want and need and/or financial greed.

During the full course of our discussions other justifications or motivations were mentioned and in effect most of the women interviewed offered several justifications. When talking to Olivia about what she did with the goods she shoplifted she told me: *'We used to keep some stuff but mostly we'd spend on rubbish, sweets, tabs and rubbish. We were doin it for the excitement of getting away with it as well as the money. I thought I was good with all this money.* (Olivia). Olivia was almost trivialising her shoplifting and explaining it as a youthful diversion and pastime. The thrill and excitement of the doing of shoplifting appears almost as important a stimulus as the end product, the obtaining of money.

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[8] Almost all of those mentioning initially 'money' also immediately followed this with reference to 'drugs'

[9] Those mentioning initially 'drugs' also most frequently mentioned 'heroin' as the named drug. The second most frequently mentioned drug was 'amphetamines'

Some justifications or motivations given by individual women appear to be oddly contradictory and money, drugs and men cannot be taken as separate, simple and discrete influences or reasons for women's lawbreaking. Kate's explanations for her doing of prostitution for lengthy periods of time are complex, varied and change over time. Illustrating the complexity of exploring explanations Kate suggests prostitution can cause further forms of victimisation and crime: '*It causes mental and emotional stress and damage and relationships are difficult. I was still hustling when I first met my partner and there was violence and hassle then I stopped, then the drugs started and the shoplifting and the arguing'*. (Kate)

In the initial stages of her heavy commitment to shoplifting Pauline (interviewed in the community) talked about how her shoplifting was bound up with her relationship:

I was in a relationship with a man and I had to get him money for his drink, betting and racing or life was, would get a crack across the face.....It was mental cruelty to me - degrading he controlled me. He was 28. I was buying his love for me.....If I'd no money at night I dreaded going home.....I'd try to keep a stable relationship with him and not get too much pressure put on us - otherwise I'd get mental cruelty. He was living with me and we were both on the dole. .....He did the odd thing too but he knew when to stop and he didn't take great risks - not bulky stuff but petty crime. He'd say I'm not going out pinching when you can. (Pauline)

It was clear that Pauline - a member of the community sample with a history of contact with the criminal justice system and experience of various sentences of the

courts - had been influenced by her contact with such institutions and their personnel. Similar to several of the other women, at times during our discussions there is an apparent change in the women's use of language. This is noticeable in Pauline's diction and as shown in the quotation above, I felt there are some phrases, words, expressions and ways of articulating their relationship with criminality which have been influenced by criminal justice professionals. Pauline's contact with a probation run women's group is evident to me in her use of the phrase *'It was mental cruelty to me - degrading he controlled me'* and particularly in her use of the word '*controlled*' when referring to her partner. I felt that Pauline had slipped into a probation-affected mode of speaking about her doing of shoplifting. It seemed clear to me that her background and life history had been explored, refashioned and thus previously rehearsed along these explanatory lines. At some points in our discussions it seems I was asking them to talk about similar things to those they had examined with their probation officer whose training then reflected the importance of exploring previous conduct, relationships and experiences linked to criminality. This was seen more particularly when some of the women used the positive empowering language of the future and when they told me how they were leaving their men behind, taking control of their lives themselves and doing things they had always wanted to do, going out when they wanted to and were taking steps towards education or a career. In reproducing the women's explanations and post-hoc justifications for their criminality I am therefore conscious of the shifting nature of these explanations and of the potential intrusion of other people's/institutions vocabularies of motives that creep into the women's reflections about their doing of crime.

Nevertheless, over two-fifths of the women specifically and immediately mentioned ' a relationship with a man' as a key reason for their law breaking and the criminological concept of 'doing-gender' appears to fit here. As the quotation from Pauline above illustrates, she is providing for or provisioning her man through shoplifting. She recognizes with hindsight, '*I was buying his love for me'*. Shoplifting for Pauline, as for Natasha, (see Chapter Seven) has become an accomplishment. For Pauline it is more than a simple economic end in itself. Like Claudia - also see Chapter Seven - shoplifting was crucial to the stability of these women's relationship with their male partner.

Multiple justifications and explanations for their shoplifting reveal how women's rationalisations for their crimes change over time and according to very specific contexts and occasions. They also reveal contradictory justifications and how having shoplifting at their disposal, as a means of speedily improving their and other's financial position (at least temporarily), has become a complex habit from which they are reluctant to free themselves. Even in apparent retirement from shoplifting they appeared tied to it, entrapped and enslaved to the crime of shoplifting. Having their shoplifting skills and opportunities constantly at their disposal, their grafting has become to some extent their life defining activity, a resource upon which they can call at any time to free themselves and escape from their marginal, impoverished and perhaps violent, socio-economic position. Shoplifting continues to hold out the prospect of economic independence, a means by which they can lift themselves out of their parlous economic state. However, it also represents a means by which they can temporarily and mentally escape by suspending their social and mental anguish via oblivion and a dependency on drink or/and drugs. For the majority of those involved

in shoplifting this was originally a law breaking activity unconnected to drugs. For some women this apparently remained the case although this is not true for the majority of those interviewed. Kate (33), like Natasha, suggests a combination of reasons for her shoplifting:

It was because yer ger up in the morning and find yerself with nothing and if yer go into town there's always someone in the estate that will buy stuff off you with the money ready and you get away with it so often until your face gets too familiar and you find yourself being watched (Kate)

PD: *'So why did you do it?'*

It depended. Sometimes it were for the children and financial gain for the house a lot of the time it was for drugs so I didn't have to take money out of the housekeeping .....I stole clothes for them in their sizes, shoes, trainers, jeans, coats, general stuff really.....When you've got social money you make the house run on social money for food and bills there's usually enough for that. It's the extras, the luxuries, I'd steal things for the house or get others to or sell stuff that I'd shoplifted. I've shoplifted bedding, curtains, electrical goods, kettles, toasters, ornaments. Someone else would be doing the cheque cards for the big items and I'd pay half price for things like videos, ghetto blasters for the kid's birthdays. (Kate)

Thus, like Natasha (See Chapter Seven), Kate is shoplifting for her young family – provisioning and 'doing-gender' - as well as for *'extras'* and *'luxuries'* seduction and

greed. However, it was even more complex than this as Kate simultaneously admits, *'it was for drugs'*.

Shoplifting emerges as an activity carried out for various reasons and it appears to be frequently done for a combination of motives. It is a means of providing material rewards for the women. In some instances the goods obtained by shoplifting were kept and used by the women, their friends, family and dependents. These goods included clothing, food and a variety of other household goods and material possessions. In the main, however, goods are traded for drugs or more often for cash that would be used to purchase drugs and therefore to finance drug habits. Thus, the purpose for the women's shoplifting affects how they do it. Shoplifting for drugs forces the grafting to become more routine, more necessary, more organised and 'economic' and essentially, more businesslike and lucrative. The greater the need for money - whether that ultimately be for drugs or for other basic requirements and material possessions – the more routine, systematic and work-like the doing of crime becomes. Thus the methods by which illegal goods are marketed and traded signify the professional element of women's criminality as well as their resourcefulness. The women's mode of operation involves well established 'rules' in relation to their pricing mechanisms when stealing to order and when operating through a third party or fences. Olivia, Jane and Judith illustrate the simple pricing policy generally adopted for the most popular high value products:

selling stuff you're getting half price - good money all the time. (Olivia)

I'd taken meat, lots of joints of beef to sell to others I knew would buy it - friends and family, I'd done it before. I'd sell it for half price to the nearest pound. For a £10 joint I'd get £5. My family bought it in bulk, they knew it was stolen.....I've stolen cigarettes, food to the value of £100 and sold it on for £50. (Jane)

Add up normal price and half it exactly (Judith)

Claudia's pricing policy was also straightforward:

For shoplifted articles I charged one third bat – one third of the actual price on the label – for orders, half bat – half what's on the ticket (Claudia)

Whilst they stole to order Helen and Brenda also elaborated upon other aspects of the business of shoplifting and how a pricing policy operates:

We had a normal buyer and they'd ask for this and we used to do our best to get them. Sometimes we made a list. At Christmas time we'd take a whole trolley worth £600 and we'd get £300 for it. .....We had loads of buyer's. People I know on the street and neighbours and that people in pubs. We'd also sometimes give parents and sisters stuff if we'd had a good day.....We swapped stuff as well. Drugs dealers would ask for certain things, clothes, bottles of spirits directly for drugs - heroin and cocaine (Helen).

For the spirits I'd have one buyer for everything a spirit bottle would be £10. I'd add the cost of everything up roughly and then half it. The buyer was a man and wife - working people and then they'd sell the stuff on. I've been selling to them for years (Brenda)

Kate's prostitution was orchestrated in similar business like style. She told me how the 'business' of prostitution worked for her and how she charged:

I used to charge when the men got into the room and wanted extras. You could charge anything you wanted from £20 to a £100 depending on what they wanted like hand relief, oral, actual sex, whatever wanted. I always used condoms. Some girls don't. I worked on a daily basis four to five days. Hours in the saunas, a ten hour shift from 11 am till 10 pm, as long as the sauna was open. On the streets I'd be out as soon as it drops dark and have two hours or so and as soon as I got what I wanted - about £100 a night. It would range between one punter to four at the most. I'd charge no less than £25. I picked them up in cars and stayed in the car or rented a room off a woman in a flat. I paid her £5 and we'd be in and out. (Kate)

(v) Grafting and Scoring

When the government cut into the weekly income of the poorest, when they ensured that there was nothing there for them to fall back on in the event of a crisis, they guaranteed not only the stress and physical illness which afflicted many of the poor, but also the creation of an alternative economy, based on crime and drugs and prostitution.

(Davies, N. 1998: 293)

Severely restricted access to, and increasing separation from, conventional job networks has meant that for many urban minority males, drug distribution and sales and the oppositional street culture have replaced legitimate work as a primary source of income, respect, and cultural meaning.

(Maher, 1997: 78)

In order to properly understand whether women's criminality can be described as 'economic' and whether women emerge as economic agents in their own right, the drugs issue demands much greater consideration. The two quotations from Davies (1998) and Maher (1997) above demonstrate only part of the drugs-crime connection in referring to the drugs-work connection. A connection between crime and work has emerged throughout this chapter in relation to both shoplifting and prostitution. Whilst this section continues to explore the crime as work through the illustration of drugs (as opposed or complementary to shoplifting and prostitution), it also explores some very different and highly complex variations of the connections between crime and drugs when choosing to prioritise a gendered and economic perspective.

It might be assumed that where shoplifting is so readily explained in terms of financing a drug habit the notion of understanding this crime of choice as economic becomes doubtful or at best a clouded issue. Similarly, in terms of viewing these women's shoplifting activities as rational economic activities this interpretation becomes perhaps less convincing. Commentators on these women would be less likely to describe them as economic actors or as women behaving rationally.

However, it seems to me that even where women have explained their lifestyle as a continuous cycle of grafting and scoring (see Rebecca below) there is ample evidence that the economic emerges as a distinct category and that the women generally demonstrate a sophisticated level of economic understanding of their situation and of 'the economic' more generally. These women do not present their lives as disorganised and routine-less on a day to basis. Rather, they describe the inevitability of the grafting or work that has to be done. The shoplifters, like Cathy and Kate who also engaged in prostitution, know the market value of their stock in trade. Economic awareness is uppermost in their knowledge of the daily cost of their habit, the specific cost of the drug, the amount of grafting needed to be done, the length of time this takes, the most profitable merchandise to steal, the value of the goods stolen and the market value for their 'hot products'.

In the later stages of her criminal career Kate admitted her shoplifting was closely related to her personal drug habit. Judith also admitted '*I had a £200 a day habit*' and for the majority of the women interviewed in prison it became clear that their shoplifting activities intensified and escalated after they became personally involved in drug taking and the maintenance of this habit became an increasingly significant reason or motivation for their shoplifting. Indeed the pattern of their law breaking not only escalated but also diversified. As Barton (2003) observes, misuse of drugs causes or contributes to other criminal behaviour by, for example, committing acquisitive crime to help fund drug misuse and this is one of the typical ways in which drug users come into contact with the criminal justice system. Table 6.2 'Drug Related Crimes' below illustrates the type of law breaking that the women engaged in order to support their drink and/or drugs habits and in most instances those of their partners, too.

Table 6.2: Drug Related Crimes

Name (age)	Drug/s Involved	Type of offences linked to drugs
Angela (25)	Amphetamines	Shoplifting, fraud and deception – a credit card offence
Brenda (28)	Heroin, cocaine	Shoplifting, cheque frauds and drug dealing
Cathy (18)	Heroin	Shoplifting, purse pinches, credit cards, burglaries, prostitution, drug dealing
Elizabeth (21)	Drink, amphetamines,	Shoplifting, burglary, supplying cannabis
Emily (17)	Drink and drugs	Burglaries ('creeps') thefts: grab and run, shoplifting
Helen (29)	Heroin, cocaine	Shoplifting, false claims, housing benefits and giros
Jane (25)	Drink and drugs: cannabis, speed, heroin, crack cocaine	Burglaries, thefts and frauds; passing stolen cheques, shoplifting, bag snatches deceptions, handling
Janet (25)	Heroin	Thefts; shoplifting and handbag thefts, stolen cheques
Joanne (28)	Drink	Shoplifting
Judith (22)	Heroin	Fraud, deception, cheque book frauds, shoplifting thefts, burglary, drug dealing
Kate (33)	Drugs	Prostitution, drug dealing, shoplifting
Martine (23)	Heroin	Shoplifting, stealing giros, drug dealing
Patricia (25)	Heroin, cocaine	Drug dealing and supplying, 'fencing' activities
Rebecca (21)	Heroin	Shoplifting
Sally (19)	Drugs: heroin, temazepan	Shoplifting
Sarah (24)	Heroin	Shoplifting, drug dealing

Shoplifting is clearly common choice of offence for women financing drug addictions. Despite a variety of offences being linked to drug habits, shoplifting remains the most significant and enduring crime of choice. Shoplifting was as an essential part of their lives and something they did as a means to an end, as illustrated

by both Helen and Rebecca:

I was dealing for drugs every day. Shoplifting four to five times a day every day. Every morning until ten o' clock at night. Even Christmas day off-licences are open to get our drugs on Christmas day (Helen)

Rebecca (21) also describes a typical day involving a continuous cycle of grafting and scoring drugs:

I'd get up in the morning early; I'd have to be, about 9, I was at me friends. I'd go out on my own up to the town, walking. I'd get a graft - either at a food store for meat or clothes shops and go back and sell that door to door and then I'd got me money about £50 and then I'd go and score - anywhere - depends. I'd hand over £40 for the drugs - heroin. I'd have that, smoke it on me own - Billy no mates - (laughing). It would be about 9.45. I'd go back to town, come back and score about 2-3 times and then go back to me friends and lie on the bed cabbaged.....(Rebecca)

Cathy's experience of prostitution was associated with her and her boyfriend's drug habit. Her boyfriend became her pimp and over a three-year period Cathy had prostituted herself nightly in order to earn £150 - £200. Kate's experience of prostitution was of longer duration. She told me that her involvement in prostitution fell into two phases. The first phase was when she had worked as a prostitute between the ages of seventeen and twenty-five. This long-term experience took place in a number of cities and was mostly what she called 'street work' but she told me she had also worked away in saunas. Kate recalled what prostitution meant to her then:

I had money and lived a lifestyle, live, not saying no to the kids, the fridge was full and the cupboards were full I bought nice clothes and had a nice standard of living

Kate's return to prostitution had occurred four years before I interviewed her when she told me she went back to street prostitution for three months. Kate's reasons for doing street level prostitution the second time around differ to those given as explanations for her previous involvement. Kate told me, 'I'd started on cocaine. I was hustling to keep the house ticking over'. After telling me her opinion of what drugs do to you and how they are addictive, referring to drugs she told me:

Whatever you've got in your pocket you'll spend on it. The prostitution was down to me then. I didn't have a pimp, I had a boyfriend and he benefited but the money was in my pocket and it was down to me what I did with it. He wouldn't take that money.

Kate's return to prostitution was a return to an illegal job, a means of making quick money for the specific purpose of obtaining drugs for her personal consumption. Her first phase of prostitution had been similarly purposeful and had enabled her to provide for herself and her children as well as purchase commodities such as food and clothing. Kate admits to provisioning; she is 'doing-gender'. The second phase of her prostitution is also purposeful but is directly linked to her personal need for drugs, in particular, her addiction to cocaine. Her return to street level prostitution was decisive and done for entirely selfish reasons. This latter account of prostitution is similar to the accounts provided by many of those interviewed in prison about the doing of shoplifting. The need for, addiction to and desire for drugs or more accurately money to purchase drugs, is the motivating factor for the doing of crime. For the majority of

the women I interviewed and who did crime for similar reasons, their choice of crime was shoplifting. For two of these women prostitution served the same purpose as shoplifting. It provided money which allowed them to satisfy their own and sometimes their partners need for drugs. Prostitution and shoplifting emerge as illegal means of supporting a hedonistic need for drugs for selfish use but partners and friends benefit as well. Women are fulfilling their own and others desires, tastes *and needs.*

The connections between drugs and crime were of a different order for Patricia who admitted to being in prison for supplying heroin and having had a three and a half year heroin addiction. She described dealing as her profession: *'I was a big drugs dealer. I opened up two other shops in our area'.* She told me how shoplifters came to her house and how the dealing worked:

.....fifty people a day, sometimes two - three times a day, each transaction between £20 and £100. One gram of heroin for £100. One bag cost £20. I'd get nine bags out of one gram. I had scales and I weighed up I had equipment for drug dealing. Electric scales, lottery papers – the long ones and a bag for grams from the stationary shops....'

For Patricia, possessional greed appears to have taken a hold yet she is still 'doing-gender' and provisioning her son. She told me what motivated her:

'I already had drugs. I wanted possessions, clothes for myself and child. I did save but the cocaine put a stop to that. I bought things that I couldn't get stolen like a motor bike for my boy, a four poster bed.'

As noted in the quote from Maher (1997) earlier, in the context of North America, for men drug selling and dealing is an important career choice and major economic activity for males. Other studies of both US and UK origin have similarly found that where legitimate jobs are hard to come by and provide poor rewards, it is a rational choice for men to enter the drug market. As the work reviewed in Chapter Two shows, there has been a variety of criminological inquiries about illegal drug use and drug dealing yet studies of women's use of drugs and their part in drug markets and economies remain relatively rare compared to those which focus on men and the assumption is that drug dealing remains a masculine territory (South 2002). Equal opportunity feminism might see new opportunities for women also to participate in drug distribution and sales.

Twenty-five year old Patricia described in detail how her drug dealing worked, how central she was to the business, the extent and size of the operation and how successful this was for her in terms of material rewards. Maher, however, is sceptical of the view that there are new opportunities for women to achieve and accomplish in the drug market. Maher's (1997) analysis focuses on how relations of gender, race/ethnicity and sexuality condition work, including illegal work. Maher discovers sexwork is the only income-generating activity and opportunity for women as producers or workers in the drug economy. Maher concludes that the division of labour in the informal economy of the drug market remains gendered and highly

sexualised. Existing sex/gender relations are reproduced. Further, she argues in respect of sexwork, within this 'secondary' secondary labour market, gendered opportunities are clearly structured by race/ethnicity'. Thus, US research indicates that though there may be opening in drug markets for women dealers this provides limited levels of autonomy for the women (Fagan 1994, Maher 1997).

Patricia succumbed to heroin and became an addict herself, which severely affected her business, although she does not admit to resorting to sex work. According to the scant literature available for comparison, for women doing sex work and drugs their opportunities for illicit income generation have not expanded dramatically. They are not lifted out of poverty, neither do they find prostitution an easy way of feeding their drug habit. They remain confined to an increasingly harsh economic periphery in the drug economy. For Maher's (1997) informants only the activity of 'viccing' (thieving or robbing dates) showed that women occasionally resisted the devaluation of their bodies. They also tried to maintain occupational norms in their street level sexwork. Otherwise the women were involved in the production of street level inequalities in the street level drug economy in a way that mirrored inequalities in the formal economy.

Interestingly, none of the women I interviewed at length outside of the prison, including the most prolific shoplifters, admitted to engaging in law breaking for reasons connected to the financing of their personal drug habit. Neither did any of this sample admit to having an alcohol problem or drug habit that was financed by recourse to shoplifting. This may in part be due to three of this sample still being under licence on probation and the fact that one of this sample was also interviewed

on probation premises. However, during their descriptions of circumstances surrounding the commission of their crimes three of this sample suggested that their fund raising by way of theft and shoplifting in particular was connected to their partnership with a man. In effect these women were also 'doing-gender'. They were, at least in part, supporting a drink and/or habit through providing the money derived from their law-breaking activities to legitimately purchase alcohol or illegally obtain drugs – usually 'tac' (cannabis). For example Claudia, a self-styled professional shoplifter, (see Chapter Seven) or as she put it '*stocktaker*', described how her ex-boyfriend of a relationship that lasted for seventeen years was violent towards her. He made her go out shoplifting every day and that if he had no money for his 'tac' and his drink, the kids would suffer and be miserable.

The foregoing overview of women's participation in shoplifting, whether connected to a drug habit or not, illustrates differences in degrees of pro-activity, rational thought and planning associated with their various shoplifting activities. Not only is customer theft their choice of criminal activity, but they also choose to further specialise in certain types of customer theft involving taking goods of their choice out of shops without paying for them. They have clear and stated preferences and methods of operating. Such subtleties suggest their shoplifting is not entirely a reactive activity carried out under some measure of duress and perhaps less of an activity that they might have been persuaded, coaxed, cajoled into as a (rational?) way of resolving pressing problems and circumstances, but more of a proactive activity and a solution. Having been initiated into shoplifting and it having escalated into a career and life defining activity, it has become 'normalised' and routine, the effort now is not to overcome the immorality or the illegality of their actions but to maximise their output at their chosen job. However, similar to Maguire's (1982)

household male burglars the majority of the women doing shoplifting in my own research might be described as 'middle range'. The burglar's successes were temporary in nature and limited by conflicts inherent in the adoption of a criminal lifestyle. Similarly, the shoplifter's successes might be seen as temporary in nature, limited by the women's attachments to feckless men, by drink or drug habits, by challenges from the law and by criminal justice related interruptions. Nevertheless a different moral code, similar to a work ethic, has come into play whereby they must graft as hard and effectively as possible in this informal and criminal marketplace largely due to a complex combination of reasons such as want and need linked to poverty and financial necessity, need for money for drugs for themselves and others, financial seductiveness or possessional greed.

Although few of the women admitted to doing sex work there are several points that can be noted in relation to the justifications or reasons the women give for doing it and similarly complex justifications for the doing of sex work to those explored for the doing of shoplifting emerge. Sometimes women appear to do crime – shoplifting or sex work - more or less selflessly and sometimes they present themselves differently; they do crime then for more selfish reasons. All of these are manifestations of the economic and all arise from the women themselves who talk in these various 'economy' terms.

(vi) Conclusion

The overview of the data derived from the total sample reveals several themes related to a more generalized generic category of the economic. Some of the emergent themes

relate well to long established criminological theorizing, especially those around economic marginalisation and the feminisation of poverty. However, there are multiple representations of the economic that appear in the women's depictions of their grafting, scoring and prostitution activities. Their reasons or justifications for doing shoplifting appear as multi-causal and complex. Mono-causal or singular justifications are rare but money and the financing of drug habits are often, at one time in their lives, likely to be dominate. Women clearly, even when their lives are complicated by a drug addiction, continue to specialise in the commission of crimes for economic gain. Amongst the popular justifications provided however, various representations of the economic emerge including poverty and need, greed and gain, often in apparent contradiction.

Concepts such as 'doing-gender' and 'provisioning' could bring together the economic and the specifically female whilst the seductions of economic crime also emerge as significant. There are the theoretical implications arising from these representations of the economic, as initial analysis suggests that several familiar models are represented whilst others that are less well represented in relation to women's crime and criminality are evident. It appears that 'economic crime' may not be so exclusively a man's game. At the very least it seems there are several relationships between female offending and the notion of the economic that might be more thoroughly explored criminologically. The notion of the economic is emerging as a pivotal category in the understanding of how and why women do shoplifting. Several manifestations of the economic are presented and whilst some representations of the economic have been thoroughly explored within feminist criminology, others are less so.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FROM CRIME TO WORK CASE STUDIES:

SHOPLIFTING AS WOMEN'S BUSINESS

(i) Introduction

In Chapter Two I identified two potentially useful theoretical links that this research might engage with. One concerns exploring the notion of rationalism. Another concerns the theoretical construct 'Doing-gender/Doing-difference' in criminology. Whilst further exploring the various representations of the economic as seen in Chapter Six, Chapter Seven explores the fit between the data arising from the women I interviewed and connections between the theoretical constructs noted above.

The findings presented in the previous chapter illustrate the nature and extent of women's principal crimes of choice. Shoplifting was the most prevalent acquisitive crime and a more concentrated focus upon the women's shoplifting is warranted. One emergent theme in the previous chapter is a theme concerning how the economic crimes of women can potentially be considered both as crime and as work. As the title of this chapter suggests, the following discussion seeks to further explore this particular theme. Whereas the previous chapter discussed data from the full sample, this chapter discusses data from qualitative in-depth interviews with two of those five women who were interviewed in the community and the data presented is in the form of analytical case studies (as discussed in detail in Chapter Three). Based on the various motivations, reasons and justifications these two women offer, this chapter explores in more detail how and why women shoplift.

At one level the chapter is concerned with further understanding the economic crime of choice that women specialise in. During the analysis of the various types of acquisitive crimes that women do, if it is clear that shoplifting is the most common crime type, it is less clear that a consistent and uniform articulation of the economic is presented. Rather, there appear to be a variety of different ways in which the notion of 'the economic' are represented. Through the use of the case study methodology this chapter seeks to further explore and assess the extent to which women's criminality can be recognised in economic or economy terms. Therefore, at another level, this chapter is concerned to extend the exploration of the women's activities and crime talk for various representations of the economic and the exploration of how women articulate their crime stories in vocabularies which we might commonly or usually associate with economic language. The women's crime talk is very closely trawled for its allusions and vocabularies relating to the economic, particularly the popular justifications related to poverty and need, greed and gain. Linked to this, and yet at another level, the chapter more specifically embarks upon a querying of the notion of the economic more generally. The data as explored in the previous chapters has already thrown into sharp relief the question of whether or not economic or rational action is discernable in women's crime talk and the question of whether women are recognisable as economic agents in their own right. Thus several levels of analysis are emerging surrounding the theme of women and crime for economic gain.

(ii) Profiles: Claudia and Natasha

Claudia

Claudia was forty seven years old when I interviewed her on two separate occasions on probation premises during a period of time she spent attending the probation service women's group as a volunteer. She had been attending the group on a voluntary basis for fifteen months with her friend, Pauline. Claudia is single and lives on a disability living allowance. She has a son of twenty-four and a daughter aged twelve years. Claudia now lives in the East of Newcastle but was born in the south of England and was one of nine children. She was brought up within a family group as the oldest of three girls. Claudia and her siblings spent several periods of time in children's homes, mostly growing up in the environs of Newcastle.

Claudia admits to truanting and shoplifting during her early teenage years when she continued to be placed in local authority care, and later Borstals, remand centres and prison. Claudia has been shoplifting since the age of 13 and has always been in trouble for shoplifting and deception. Claudia was first pregnant at the age of 16. Two years later she met her partner of 17 years who she describes as being violent towards her.

Claudia's criminal career, like Natasha's is dominated by experiences of shoplifting. Also similar to Natasha's story, Claudia's lifestyle throughout her 20's and 30's has been influenced by a male partner. She suggests that he also made her go out shoplifting every day and that 'if he had no money for his tac and his drink the kids

would suffer and be miserable'. He had no job and has spent the last 3 years in jail. During this period of time, however, she developed her expertise as a shoplifter and her pride in her career as a shoplifter is evident. Her story shows how at the pinnacle of her career she became respected and thereafter generally known and referred to in her own right, as Claudia the 'stocktaker'. Claudia's criminal history is prolific in terms of its longevity and the extent of commitment to the activities of shoplifting, fraud and deception.

The data presented here is derived from contemporaneous notes taken during these two interviews. Data is also reproduced from what she called a 'diary' which she wrote herself. This twelve-page typed 'diary' tells her life story sub-divided according to memorable years. Claudia had recently finished writing this as part of a previous probation experience. Claudia referred me to this document and spontaneously suggested I could have a copy of it. She made this 'diary' available to me during our second interview.

Natasha

Natasha was thirty-three when I first met her at own home in Ferryhill where she lived with her three children and partner and where I interviewed her on two separate occasions. Her two girls were in their early teens whilst her third, the only child and son of her current partner, was a fourteen month old baby boy. She was born in the south and moved around a lot with her family as her dad was in the army.

Natasha is tall and very thin and dresses casually, youthfully and fashionably. She has long, thin curly hair which she wears in a scraped up geyser hairstyle. We arranged to talk during school hours when her older girls would not be present – they had little

knowledge about the full extent of her law-breaking activities and Natasha's shoplifting career had reportedly ended a few years prior to interview. Although not in work now and living on income support and disability allowance, she has worked full-time in the past in a factory.

Shoplifting had clearly dominated a good part of her life, as had her relationship with a previous partner, Des. Natasha's offending history is prolific and mostly involves shoplifting and thefts. She has also engaged in social security frauds. She has been sentenced to prison and spent time on remand several times although when I interviewed her she was no longer under any sentence of the court and she told me her shoplifting career had ended a few years ago.

(iii) Case Studies

This case study of Natasha and Claudia is one of professional shoplifters. A comparative approach to the use of the two case studies is adopted as this allows a search for both commonalities and contrasting elements between Natasha and Claudia experiences of and reflections about shoplifting. Furthermore, this approach allows contradictions within and between their justifications and explanations to become evident. As in the remainder of the interviews a semi-structured approach allowed discussions to focus upon core areas including the nature and extent of their shoplifting, reasons for their shoplifting and their means and methods of shoplifting. As in previous chapters direct quotations are used extensively in order to remain as faithful to the original discussion as possible and to ensure the presentation of the data is grounded. Interview extracts from both Claudia and Natasha are presented in italics

and lower case. Extracts from Claudia's diary are in italics and upper case (the latter as in the original, as are spellings and punctuation).

The case studies commence with a descriptive account of the nature and extent of Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting, demonstrating the scale, proportions and magnitude of it. This account includes detail on the means and methods adopted to shoplift and offering some comparative comment on this. Thereafter, the case study data is organised around two additional substantive areas. The first addresses Claudia and Natasha's respective initiations into shoplifting and the second addresses their post-hoc justifications for the doing of shoplifting.

During my first interviews with both Claudia and Natasha it was immediately apparent that they had become professional and organised as shoplifters. In many ways they were skilled in their chosen trade (Geis 1974), women who live by their wits (Sutherland and Conwell 1937). Also following Sutherland and Conwell's classic typology of professional thieves, Claudia and Natasha, as with the remainder of the sample, preferred to specialise in certain crimes, notably shoplifting or 'grafting'. Although they had both been unsuccessful on many occasions, having been caught by security staff and police, and both had been prosecuted and sentenced for their customer theft related crimes, they also claim to have committed hundreds more similar offences for which they have never been caught. Thus in terms of the 'league division of villainy' (Foster 1990) Claudia and Natasha fall into the professional league and like Shover's (1972) professional and 'good' burglars they have several distinguishing characteristics including technical competence, personal integrity, specialisation and financial success and the ability to avoid prison sentences. In

addition, they both describe their shoplifting as professional. They present the key hallmarks of professional offenders as defined by Carlen (1988:59). During interviews they indicated the following:

- A long-term commitment to shoplifting
- Shoplifting as a routine activity
- Specialist adaptations to shoplifting
- Knowledge of the market – customer demand and supply and pricing mechanisms

For analytical purposes each of these themes are explored in turn below. In reality and in our interview discussions, however, they coexist and operate in concert. Representing these distinctive features of Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting helps to demonstrate the significance of shoplifting in both Claudia and Natasha's lives and the extent to which shoplifting or grafting best sums up their personal occupations.

A long-term commitment to shoplifting

As a schoolgirl of about thirteen years old Claudia experimented at shoplifting along with her school friends. By the age of fifteen within her peer group she had become known as Claudia the shoplifter. A year later for Claudia shoplifting became 'grafting' and this had begun to govern how she was viewed and how she was more generally known. This aspect of who Claudia was and what she was similarly impacted upon her long-term partner Mick and their relationship together. Throughout her twenties and thereafter Claudia learnt how she could earn respect from Mick as she had from her schoolmates by displaying the rewards from her shoplifting skills.

Claudia described how her shoplifting snowballed from her early schoolgirl experimentations. Writing many years later, Claudia wrote of the year 1968

……THIS WAS THE START OF MY LIFE OF CRIME

Claudia also told me: '*I've been shoplifting since the age of thirteen up to six months ago'*. Shoplifting turned into 'grafting' and finally 'stocktaking' in over twenty years full and part-time commitment to shoplifting. Claudia's lifetime commitment to shoplifting reads like a description of a career.

Natasha formed a relationship with Des at the age of seventeen. Her shoplifting began within a couple of years of meeting him. She served a very short apprenticeship and her shoplifting escalated very quickly. Natasha told me:

It was a big part of me life for a long time, a lot of years I was out shoplifting I was I think I was doin it for about five or six years and it wasn't just like a few weeks'

Reflecting back on how she decided it all had to stop Natasha told me '*I'd had a good run at it yer know what I mean……* ' Natasha acknowledges her long-term commitment to shoplifting and how it had taken over a large part of her life especially during the early years of her two girls' lives.

- **Shoplifting as a routine activity**

Both Claudia and Natasha discussed the ways in which shoplifting became habitual and at some stages a routine daily activity. Of the later 1970's/early 1980's, Claudia's 'diary' explains:

I WAS STILL SENT OUT SHOPLIFTING EVERY DAY IN THE END IT WAS LIKE A NINE TO FIVE JOB,

In response to further questions regarding the extent of her involvement in shoplifting she also told me: '*Shoplifting? – I was out every day six days a week. In six months I was nicked once and I was engaged in hundreds'*. Claudia often referred to her shoplifting in labour terms and in terms of it being her work and shoplifting her occupation. In this respect the economic is represented here as self-employment by Claudia. This is the transformation of the activity into a form of work from an exciting yet simultaneously lucrative part-time crime. Grafting, as a term, represents a more serious and long-term commitment to this means of gaining not only respect and approval but also substantial financial rewards and other economic benefits. The final and ultimate euphemism, stocktaking, represents still more of a businesslike attitude to the activity that almost totally dominates her life. Claudia the '*stocktaker*' is now who she is. Stocktaking is her life defining activity and it presents a façade of respectability in its mimicry of a professional job title.

Claudia also wrote and spoke about the regularity and predictability of her shoplifting. At some points in her life shoplifting occupied a great deal of her time. She told me: '*....it was me job. I left home at 9am and came home between four and five o'clock when I was really active*..... 'Further into the second interview Claudia elaborates upon how she prefers to shoplift. She refers to her (illegal) work and told me: '*I work alone. I hate working with anyone else...* '

Like Claudia, Natasha talked about how her shoplifting snowballed: '*Once I'd started getting the money for them I was going every day pinchin in*.....'. Natasha told me how orders were coming in thick and fast. At this point it seems that Natasha is directly contributing as a major player to the local informal/criminal economy. Events

and circumstances combined to intensify her commitment to shoplifting. She told me: '....*So I thought this is it. I'm never going to get a days rest...*'. She later continued: *It was a job. Yes in fact I once described it like that I think it was to.....It was like a business really, because there was people phoning up and takin orders. Supply and demand really. That was it. It was every day every single day.*

For Natasha shoplifting was a routine activity, it became habitual, a way of life. She describes a typical day during early motherhood:

I would ger up about half six seven o'clock on a mornin, sort the kids out. This was when I had the car. The children would be about 3 or 4 years old and Jessie she was in nursery which was even better. I would get up sort the kids out. Do the housework, tidy up sort out the washing and do anything I had to do like that yer know get meself ready. Go down for Karen, get the babysitter in or take her with us whichever was convenient erm, sort the orders out for the day. We'd go through the list of stuff that we'd taken from phone calls. The ones that had the most profit. The ones that had the most money to be made from, them got priority. Decide where we would go, go out, do, do what needed to be done, whichever shops needed to be done, go home sort everything out. Phone the necessary people who had made the orders, they'd either come down or we would go round there.....

On those occasions when she took her children Natasha admits how even her young girl in a pushchair contributed to the routine and became involved in a habitual way:

..... *When yer take kids out and I had a little pushchair in a pushchair, like, say the back of this high chair's like a pushchair. I took them with us that many times I used to shove stuff down behind her so I could move to a more secure part of the shop*

where I could pinch it. So when I first started off I would move their heads forward to slide whatever it was down the back. In the end it got where I just had to tap them on the back of the head and they would lean forward and then sit back straight away. They knew what I wanted them to do. I know it sounds awful but that's just the way it was.

Natasha's contributions to the local informal/criminal economy increasingly represent the economic - as employment. Simultaneously, the economic is represented - as business-as profit and this business now appears to have become a local entrepreneurial activity as well as a family business, which includes and directly employs her children.

In a later part of our interview Natasha talked about how getting caught was an occupational hazard: *'.....they were bad times when we used to get caught but I mean it was part of the job really yer know what I mean?'*

- **Specialist adaptations to shoplifting**

Claudia's descriptions of how she shoplifted suggest she personalised the activity to best suit her own skills and needs. Natasha, as particularly seen in the quotations directly above, similarly demonstrates how she personalised the activity to best suit her own skills, circumstances and needs. Natasha generally demonstrates a more flexible and versatile approach to shoplifting for different goods than Claudia does but they both nevertheless describe what might be referred to as specialist adaptations to shoplifting and have acquired well-honed shoplifting skills.

Although both Claudia and Natasha clearly specialised in shoplifting, they choose to do it in different ways. Natasha had clearly shoplifted or 'worked' with several other young women as well as on her own, even recruiting and training a friend and neighbour to work with her. Natasha develops team work in her shoplifting business whereas Claudia had experienced 'working' with others but stated that she '*hated it*' and preferred always to 'work' alone. Natasha started out shoplifting heavy-duty hire equipment and electrical goods, indeed household and DIY goods continued to feature on her illegal shopping list, whether for her own or other's households. However, as a shop thief Natasha was flexible and practical. As a female shoplifter she also stole goods of a more traditionally feminine nature such as clothes, dresses, shoes, food, drink and videos. To execute the theft of such goods she would put them into laundry or other bags, hide them in her jacket or in her daughter's pushchair. She told me:

I had a pushchair and on the back of the pushchair where the handles come down I had a bag, I had me handbag and I bought a big handbag with the intention of how much I could fit in it and I had different bags for different things that I wanted when I started.....I was going in with – you've seen them big launderette bags - I was going into a shop with a big laundrette bag like with a blanket in so it looked like I'd been to the launderette, going straight to the booze section filling it to the brim full with booze, putting a blanket over the top, buying a pint of milk and walking out of the shop and selling it straight away at half price.

Natasha also describes how she learnt how to make use of specialist equipment such as foil lined bags and scanners and even disguises to ensure success. Learning the

ticks of the trade was achieved by serving her apprenticeship with Des but also by on the job training and learning from more practiced female property offenders who she met during her passage through the criminal justice system. In particular, Natasha told me how her experience of imprisonment enabled her to swap shoplifting knowledge and further develop her shoplifting expertise from a fellow inmate who also introduced her to other venues for shoplifting as well as other law-breaking activities. Others have similarly found that women in prison share and exchange criminal knowledge and expertise (Genders and Player,1987) and interestingly develop a system of economic exchange around tobacco, food, clothes and personal favours. The lining of empty shoplifting bags with foil in order to circumvent the security alarm systems in shops was a method Natasha learned about from this more experienced offender:

Another shoplifter told us (about the foil) cos when I got locked up she became quite a good friend ……..well she was in the cell with me ……...so of course that opened up another doorway for us. Have car will travel. We started goin down there, goin down ter ……...She was the one who told us about the foil an that an then I told her where to get the immobilisers from to immobilise alarms. Just clicked them off an stopped the alarm. Very hard to come by. We even defrauded the bloody telephone company, can yer believe it. We'd buy these things these er it was like a little box an yer used to pick the phone up an we used ter put it over the mouthpiece of the phone, get yer dialling tone, press a button, dial yer number in and it would cancel out, go through the BT's phones without even registering on the bill. So of course you couldn't be listened in on either.

In contrast to Natasha's more varied experiences of different forms of shoplifting which included stealing by various means and methods an assortment of household goods and materials, Claudia has a preference for a very much a more specialist and personalised approach to shoplifting. Her illegal shopping list typically features coats and handbags, specific brands from the bigger department stores. She also kept her method simple; she said she would '*just walk out with the stuff*'.

Claudia became a specialist '*stocktaker*' with clear and distinct preferences. She told me:

I have done cheques but I didn't like it I prefer to walk out with the goods under my arm leaving the tags on so there's no messing in the shop. I just turn the coat in so the collar is on the inside.

Claudia knows her strengths as a shoplifter preferring the more traditional form of customer theft – shoplifting – to other methods of illegally obtaining goods from shops such as credit and cheque cards frauds. She is also clear about her preferred technique. Not only does she prefer to 'work' alone but she also said:

I just walk out with the stuff. I don't use a bag. Claudia states her preference for certain types of shops to others, mostly the bigger shops where coats and handbags of a specific brand were her 'speciality'. These include Enny bags, Jane Shilton and Tula handbags. As she put it:

'*these are easy there's no messing with sizes in the shop*'.

Stealing from larger stores clearly became a sustainable activity, a way of life. The notion of becoming business-like and buying and selling is described in more detail in the next section. The subtleties, preferences and specialist adaptations are not only

evidence shoplifting is a sustainable activity but also that various degrees of pro-activity, rational thought and planning are features incumbent in Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting. Not only is customer theft their choice of criminal activity, but they also choose to further specialise in certain types of customer theft. They have clear and stated preferences and have nurtured their own idiosyncratic methods of operating.

The foregoing suggests Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting has become less of a reactive activity that they (and possibly other female shoplifters) might do under some measure of duress, an activity that Natasha for example might originally have been persuaded, coaxed, cajoled into as a rational solution to pressing problems and circumstances, but more of a proactive activity. This notion of rational economic thought and planning together with other features indicative of the extent to which women's agency and structure combine in complex and multi-tiered ways is further explored in a subsequent section on reasons and justifications for shoplifting later in this chapter. However, summarising so far, it appears that having been initiated as shoplifters, the activity of shoplifting has for Natasha and Claudia escalated into an illegal career path, to the extent that shoplifting represents what they do for a living. Shoplifting has become 'normalised' and routinised. Claudia and Natasha's efforts are geared not towards overcoming the immorality or the illegality of their actions but towards maximising outputs. A moral code or work ethic has come into play whereby they must graft as hard, effectively and efficiently as possible in this illegal job and in the informal and criminal markets that how now become their workplace. As Claudia and Natasha learn how shoplifting can be turned to their advantage they demonstrate that at least in part some of this advantage comes in the form of material and

economic reward. This is one strong economic theme arising in Natasha and Claudia's shoplifting stories. Both variously appreciate how shoplifting constitutes both a rational and an economic activity.

- **Knowledge of the market**

In exploring this particular theme we can further add to the growing evidence that Natasha and Claudia both have a keen appreciation of the economic that matches well with our traditional and dominant understanding of the economic as rational business in the environs of the marketplace. Their descriptions of themselves as shoplifters demonstrate considerable knowledge of the market and of customer demand and supply and pricing mechanisms. Traditional, dominant and broadly accepted representations and appreciations of the economic are wedded to business-oriented activities such as trading, buying and selling of goods and services according to the demand and supply mechanisms of the market. Thus the economic refers to a cost benefit calculation of profit and gain versus loss, benefits versus costs.

Whilst discussing how shoplifting had become rather like an illegitimate job and illegal business, Natasha told me how the orders for different varieties of goods had become increasingly varied. Initially the orders had come via Des and were for goods of the heavy-duty variety from the hire shop. Des's orders for goods kept her shoplifting career ticking over and included the stealing of electrician's cables, brass fittings and fixtures. Des might be seen as encouraging this career path through his failure to adequately contribute to the costs of keeping his family and through his demands for his share of the proceeds in order to support his drinking and gambling habits. The process of becoming businesslike as a shoplifter for Natasha was gradual

but inevitable. She became more adept, versatile, flexible, prolific and professional as a shoplifter. The orders for goods flooded in, the goods were duly obtained and swiftly converted into cash whilst the surplus was used in Natasha's household. She told me how the mechanisms of demand and supply operated:

..... I mean it was literally the people around who knew us just. People around us were goin like down to the town and saying: 'Natasha I've seen this bedding set, I want this'. They'd give us what stuff they wanted, which shop it was in and it was fifty quid they were gettin a bargain they were gettin good gear I mean who wouldn't yer know what I mean.

In terms of the value of goods, Natasha knew how much shoplifting constitutes a good days takings. She told me: '*If I came away with less than £1000 of stuff I'd done badly'*. Like the remainder of the sample involved in shoplifting to order, Natasha had a clear pricing policy where goods were sold at half of their shop value price.

The goods Claudia stole were normally sold on due to her cash requirements. She organised her shoplifting in two ways. One way was to shoplift known '*best sellers'* or lines that could be relied upon to attract customers that were at once easy to steal and had little risk involved yet would reap substantial profits. Another way was to steal goods to order. Although both of these ways of carrying out the business of shoplifting were engaged in simultaneously, she claims orders were more profitable. Her contacts/customers or *best buyers* were evidently managers of pubs whom she said '*would buy anything'*. In terms of the price of goods obtained in this way, the pricing mechanism was straightforward and had a specialist language known to those in the business. Claudia told me:

For shoplifted articles I charge one third bhat - one third of the actual price on the label - for orders, half bhat - half what's on the ticket.

In addition to knowing the market for stolen goods in order to maximise the returns from her shoplifting, Claudia admits to being enmeshed in the more general market for stolen goods and informal economy.

The foregoing description of Claudia and Natasha's; long-term commitment to shoplifting; their shoplifting as a routine activity; their specialist adaptations to shoplifting and their knowledges of the market amount to a presentation of Natasha and Claudia as organised and professional shoplifters. Furthermore, Claudia and Natasha's self-portrayals are as professionals. They present themselves as shoplifters and others recognise them as such. This has parallels with some small pockets of academic literature that considers professional aspects of traditional offending patterns most notably in relation to men and boys. Burglars and robbers have identified themselves and their criminal activities in similar illegal work-like ways (see for example Bennett and Wright 1984, Maguire 1982, Walsh 1986). Claudia and Natasha are professional shoplifters or grafters, Claudia is a stocktaker, these nouns best describe who they are and sum up their personas. Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting reaches the stage where it becomes almost first rather than second nature and they appear to have developed their own moral code and principles of a work ethic. They do shoplifting to the best of their ability, to the extreme and with pride. The unfolding details of Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting appear to fit very closely with one particular response connected to anomie theory (Merton 1938). As briefly

referred to in Chapter Two Merton might have called this type of deviance *innovation.* Claudia and Natasha seem to be doing their shoplifting in an attempt to achieve some standing and success. Conversely, in their successful achievement of shoplifting they appear to possess an additional key hallmark of the professional thief, and that is status (Sutherland and Conwell1937).

Natasha and Claudia labelled themselves shoplifters. Both told me they did shoplifting as a job and occupational activity. In addition, their long term commitment to shoplifting as a routine activity, their specialist adaptations and knowledge of the illegal business and marketplace attest to their professional status and confirm they merit the title and status of professional shoplifters. In contrast to Claudia and Natasha, Maureen and Deborah's roles in the organised crime business (as briefly discussed in Chapter Five) appears more ad hoc and although their part demands wit and skill and their roles are essential, their parts in organised crime do not appear to have granted them any particularly hard earned or deserved status in the criminal business. They have distinct and functional organisational roles but they do not have master status as criminals as forgers or as smugglers and the chief source of illegal goods. They do not ascribe such status to themselves not do they have it within their communities.

In descriptive terms, Claudia and Natasha have clearly been engaged in relatively serious levels of shoplifting. The seriousness of their involvement can be measured according to several criteria including duration, frequency of offending, extent as well as the amount and value of goods stolen. They had clearly also been involved in shoplifting in a very organised manner. In sum, they present themselves and appear

responsible for the provision of vast amounts of stolen goods made available for circulation in the local informal/criminal economy.

Presented in this way shoplifting closely approximates Croall's (1998) definition of skilled, professional property crime. This involves large financial rewards, a degree of organisation including stealing to order and generally greater degrees of skill and planning than unskilled, amateur property crime from which it can be broadly distinguished. Indeed within criminology, and as indicated in Chapter Two, it is commonplace to recognise professional and organised crimes and offending in economic terms. Motivations for engaging in professional and organised crime are generally consistent with notions of economic greed, financial and more general economic gain whereas the professional and organised aspects of more mundane and traditional offences and perhaps offenders i.e. those doing burglary and shoplifting are rarely accorded a similar range of economic motivations and explanatory discourse unless of course those offences are carried out by male perpetrators. These issues are further developed in the context of the broader criminological literature in Chapter Eight.

There are several significant and strong themes arising from the analysis so far of Natasha and Claudia's shoplifting as an economic crime. The descriptive picture presented here suggests that shoplifting is indeed women's work and women's business. This has been explored through an exploration of four emerging themes: a long-term commitment to shoplifting, shoplifting as a routine activity, specialist adaptations to shoplifting, knowledge of the market – customer demand and supply and pricing mechanisms. The remainder of this chapter is concerned with further data

arising from the case study of Claudia and Natasha as shoplifters. It is organised around two areas, the first of which concerns initiation into shoplifting and the second concerns Claudia and Natasha's self and post-hoc justifications for doing shoplifting. There are overlaps between these two sections.

Initiation into shoplifting

Both Claudia and Natasha had encountered much contact with the criminal justice system and its personnel and both had been imprisoned and subject to several probation sanctions and supervisory periods by the time of interviewing. The women's experiences of these formal sanctions will have to a greater or lesser extent impacted upon their own rationalisations and justifications of their behaviour and activities and like Pauline – discussed in Chapter Six – this undoubtedly affects their use of language. The following analysis differentiates between the women's early accounts of their induction to shoplifting and their participation in and commitment to it at different points in time. Such an approach enables checks and balances to be made of their accounts and also facilitates a less static and greater comparative analysis.

In order to strike up a discussion around their doing of shoplifting I asked both Claudia and Natasha 'How did you get into it?' (shoplifting). This simple initial question proved a useful way of breaking into accounts about how they originally became initiated into shoplifting. This question was aimed at discovering their reasons for becoming involved in this activity in the first instance. There are immediate differences between Natasha and Claudia's responses. Natasha began describing her partner Des as a violent man whose drinking she described as:

getting habitable, yer know what I mean? He was doin it all the time and then I didn't even realise that he'd turned into an alcoholic anyway……

Natasha admitted to being frightened of Des and during our second interview she described several violent incidents between Des and herself and between Des and the police. It was shortly after they had started a family together that Des told her he needed her to go to some shops and hire some equipment. Natasha told me:

I was nervous and I had ter…… this was the first time I ever offended. I had to go and hire these tools like these generators, still saws stuff like that yer know like heavy duty equipment and like er I like hired them out for the day. I had to say I was in this car I couldn't even drive or anything. I was saying can yer take this to the car I was like here the fella from the shop was saying can you not pull the car round? er er no no cos like I'm I'm a really terrible driver and I got meself into this spot and I can't move while Des was waitin round the corner well I did…… was one and another two shops that's just more or less the other end of the street…… . That was like the first time I did anything wrong it was a load of money. £8000 worth of stuff.

Natasha presented this as her first offence. It served as a short apprenticeship to shoplifting. Reasons for Natasha becoming involved in theft appear to originate in her relationship with Des. As indicated above, she uses the phrase *'I had ter….'* and *'I had to……'* and in doing so she chooses to shift the focus on to Des as the primary instigator and her key motivator. Natasha is not excusing herself or abdicating herself from any responsibility, rather, as the broader context of the discussion shows, she is admitting that Des had a considerable level of power and control over her. The notion of being pushed into offending is strongly suggested in Natasha's opening remarks. This resonates with the empirical findings and theorising of other feminist

criminologists. Daly (1994) for example argues that being (or having been) in a relationship with a violent man is one dimension of why women get caught up in crime and one which impacts upon their blameworthiness. Natasha is claiming a relationship with a violent man and according to Daly, Natasha represents a 'harmed woman' (Daly 1994:58) and this constitutes a clear pathway into crime for many women.

Claudia's initiation into shoplifting was as a girl of twelve or thirteen years old. As with many other adolescents, both male and female, Claudia experimented whilst at school. Her dexterity as a shoplifter rapidly became apparent and her reputation, once earned, had to be maintained. This was achieved over the next two years before she became familiar with the juvenile courts for this form of law breaking. Her shoplifting continued, escalating throughout her teenage years. Reflecting back upon this early period Claudia later wrote:

……THIS WAS THE START OF MY LIFE OF CRIME, ALTHOUGH IT NEVER SEEMED LIKE CRIME, IT JUST MADE ME EQUAL TO MY PEERS, IT ALL STARTED AT LUNCHTIMES ON SCHOOLDAYS, THE FIRST STORE TO SUFFER FROM MY LIFE OF CRIME WAS THE CO-OP NEAR …… EVERY LUNCHTIME I WOULD GO DOWN WITH TWO FRIENDS AND STEAL CRISPS SWEETS PENCILS ETC, AT LAST I WAS BETTER THAN MY FRIENDS AT SOMETHING, THE WORD GOING ROUND THE PLAYGROUND WAS 'HAVE YOU SEEN CLAUDIA SHOPLIFTING'? SHE'S BRILLIANT! SOON I WAS TAKING LUNCHTIME ORDERS IF THEY WEREN'T MY CLOSE FRIENDS I WOULD CHARGE THEM HALF PRICE, EVEN IF I WANTED TO STOP I COULDN'T AS TOO MANY PEOPLE RELEYED ON ME NOW.

I THEN WENT ON TO PLAYING TRUANT AND VISITING…… AND ……, I WASN'T KNOWN AS CLAUDIA ANYMORE I WAS KNOWN AS CLAUDIA THE SHOPLIFTER, EVEN MY FRIENDS MOTHERS USED TO 'PLACE THEIR ORDERS'.

Claudia's early experiences of shoplifting differ from Natasha's. Natasha pinpoints the start of her offending to when she was about nineteen years old and attributes its cause at that time largely to Des. Claudia pinpoints the start of her shoplifting to an earlier age of about thirteen and a school peer group pathway is indicated. Nevertheless there are various representations of the manifold benefits that accrue from shoplifting evident in both reflections on their early experiences. Benefits or rewards are represented in both self-esteem and financial or economic terms. Claudia's diary notes how she stole crisps, sweets and pencils for herself and for friends' consumption and use, how she knew she was better than her friends and how people relied on her. Her shoplifting earned her high praise: '*SHE'S BRILLIANT*'. Moreover, even at this early stage she was soon taking orders and charging half price thereby gaining direct monetary reward. Natasha was clearly doing her first theft to comply with Des's demands and hence to please and keep him happy but she also indicates her knowledge of the vast worth of the goods she had stolen: '*it was a load of money £8000 worth of stuff*'.

At this early point of comparison, the differences and similarities between Claudia and Natasha's initiation into shoplifting indicate how women's agency is already represented in a complex way. There are indications that Natasha and Claudia's shoplifting can be characterised in terms of rational action yet this interacts so strongly with other social-structural variables, namely Des for Natasha and her peer group for Claudia, that the rationalism fades into relative obscurity. The complex ways in which women's agency manifests itself deserves further analysis during the course of the two women's shoplifting careers. Similarly diverse economic motivations manifest themselves at an early stage of both women's shoplifting

careers. These emergent complex references to human action and to the economic continue to be explored in the next section.

Post-hoc Justifications for Shoplifting: Need and greed

A variety of justifications or 'explanations' are evident in interviews with both Natasha and Claudia. Indeed as with the majority of the remainder of the sample several justifications appear, some of which appear contradictory. The section above, 'initiation into shoplifting' provides a benchmark in terms of Claudia and Natasha's justifications and an initial point of comparison between the two women. Analysis of the women's initiation into shoplifting usefully provides a departure point for comparing their individual accounts of shoplifting over a lengthy period of time. The next extract shows the contradictory juxtaposition of two 'explanations' or reasons for shoplifting. Natasha (who unlike the majority of the prison based sample of women interviewed did not admit to a personal drug habit) told me:

.....Cos that's all Des was leaving me with 10 quid to feed the kids, pay the gas and the rent the bills, I had ter, I had ter pinch really to survive. I could see the financial gains and everything just got bigger and more expensive items. I wasn't satisfied with a £10 dress or a £100 dress.

On the one hand, as indicated in the first part of the quotation, Natasha is appealing to her impoverished state and need to provide for her family and simply survive domestic living. Criminologically this is easily recognisable as a typical explanation for women doing property crime. Natasha, in stereotypical female fashion, is 'doing-gender' through the resource of shoplifting. She is using shoplifting to accomplish motherhood and to accomplish domesticity. She is providing, or to use the feminist economist concept, she is 'provisioning' (Ferber and Nelson 1993, Mellor 1997). Her

means of provisioning is, however, illegitimate. She is providing for or 'provisioning' her family using the techniques, skills and know-how she has developed through her knowledge of shopping to her advantage, albeit in an illegitimate way. In this specific context of Natasha's shoplifting, provisioning is an appropriate way of explaining what she is doing. Rather than beg or borrow, Natasha is developing her resources and appears to be selecting this method of stealing to provide for her family. Hence criminologically, Natasha might be illustrative of the twin concepts of 'doing – gender' and 'provisioning' where both the economic and the specifically female are brought neatly together. However, Natasha's explanations are not so straightforward and bear further discussion. The last sentence of the quotation above is perhaps less often heard or seen in relation to women's criminality and is less adequately explained in criminology. This sentence suggests she is also admitting that she has been seduced by the attractiveness of the new material positions and posessions her shoplifting brings her. Some sort of career development took place that made her think more proactively about the rewards and benefits made available through shoplifting. The comment that she was no longer satisfied with a certain price of dress suggests that she had become more consumed by the habit and that she had become greedy for more and better things. Natasha oscillates between describing shoplifting as a solution to her and her family's survival needs and in terms of her greed for financial gain.

The process by which Natasha became embroiled in shoplifting is described above and she went on to reflects upon how she became businesslike:

.....I dunno I started it wasn't a means of supportin any more. Greed took over the more I did it the more greedy I got to the point in fact where I was going to the Metro Centre and if I came away with less than £1000 of stuff I'd done badly.

Doing-femininity no longer seems to be sufficient and a bifurcated explanation is offered where need and greed briefly emerge in tandem and then she admits greed took over.

According to Gilligan (1982) women's lives are best understood in the context of their close personal relationships and their familial responsibilities. Moreover, women's distinctive form of moral reasoning connects to their moral 'ethic of care'. Feminist criminology has also sensitised us to appreciate that in order to better understand and explain women's involvement in property crime we are required to understand women's social and familial partnerships and responsibilities and how these combine with economic marginalisation. Natasha's shoplifting, from the outset, is presented as directly linked to her relationship with Des and it soon also emerged as closely bound up with domestic and familial responsibilities. For example, Natasha also talks about the financial strains of sustaining a family. She reports how Des continued to '*drink more and more*' and he also '*started gamblin*' during a period when she had become increasingly dependent on him and social security money. Day to day living was a hand to mouth existence and Natasha resorts to shoplifting and hence her resemblance to the more traditional and stereotypical female shoplifter:

I was going down my mams. Mum was takin food out of the freezer she was giving us bits and bobs like you know what I mean? and er I started claiming on me own and he claimed for him and takin mine so he could go out more and then he started gamblin. I just dinna, I don't know how it really started. I went out and er the first thing I took

was clothes for the girls and I went out and er the first time I ever did it I think it was ---- somewhere like that for clothes for the girls for the two lasses. They would have been about three or four.....Then it was like I was justifying it to meself cos I knew it was wrong but I thought well I've got to do it to support me kids and then I started going on to shoplifting food. I was just doin it for a while. It was for clothes for meself for food.

When at serious risk of being arrested and prosecuted for shoplifting, Natasha describes an exchange of words she had with a policewoman who chastise her for doing shoplifting with her children:

and there was this policewomen, I'll never forget her - fat woman she was screaming abuse at me.' How could you take your children out shoplifting? You're nowt but a common thief'. I said to her - who do you think you are? You're stood there in your posh clothes with your good job and your good pay packet at the end of the week ...'

Natasha vents her frustration at the injustice of her material condition and her own economic hardship and need relative to the more comfortable position of the police officer.

Similar gendered power relations and representations of the economic are evident from a fuller appreciation of Claudia's story. Claudia describes how her ex-boyfriend, Mick, with whom she had a relationship that lasted for seventeen years, was violent towards her. He made her go out shoplifting every day and if he had no money for his 'tac' and his drink, the kids would suffer and be miserable. Claudia's grafting habits were described to me during our interviews and also in her retrospective 'diary':

…… HE WAS BY NOW SMOKING TACK EVERY NIGHT AND MUGGINGS ME WAS OUT SHOPLIFTING TO GET IT FOR HIM. I WAS A BRILLIANT LASS IF I GRAFTED ALL DAY AND GAVE HIM THE MONEY FOR THE DRUGS AND DRINK…… ……HE REALISED HE HAS A SUCKER WHO WOULD DO IT (SHOPLIFTING) FOR HIM…… ……THE MORE MONEY I GOT THE MORE RESPECT I GOT FROM HIM AND THE BETTER HE WOULD TREAT THE KIDS…… ……I WAS SENT OUT ALMOST EVERY DAY 'TO GRAFT' IT WAS EITHER GO TO GRAFT OR SIT IN THE HOUSE AND RECEIVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL ABUSE. I TOOK WHAT I THOUGHT WAS THE EASY WAY OUT - SHOPLIFTING

Claudia wrote how in the early 1980's:

I WAS STILL SENT OUT SHOPLIFTING EVERY DAY IN THE END IT WAS LIKE A NINE TO FIVE JOB, THE HARMONY IN MY HOUSE WAS BRILLIANT IF ID HAD A GOOD DAY GRAFTING EVERYTHING WAS ROSY AND THAT'S THE WAY I WANTED IT TO BE SO TO ACHIEVE THIS I HAD TO GRAFT, AS LONG AS MY PARTNER HAD HIS TACK AND HIS DRINK THE WORLD WAS MY OYSTER, MY SON WAS TREAT LIKE A KING BY HIM BUT ONLY WHEN HE HAD HIS HABITS.

Claudia states Mick sent her out shoplifting. This way of justifying her shoplifting was not the only one apparent in Claudia's crime talk although it did predominate at certain points in her accounts and summaries. Like Natasha, Claudia explained her first offence of shoplifting in terms of her being pressurised and pushed into shoplifting by Des, *'I had ter…' and I had to…..'*, Claudia's shoplifting appears at times strongly influenced by her male partner: *'I was still sent out…'* . In terms of more fully understanding why Claudia shoplifts, her relationship with Mick is significant. If this relationship did not originally pave the way for her commitment to shoplifting, it is presented as maintaining her commitment to it. Thus, both Natasha

and Claudia claim their respective partners held considerable sway over their need to shoplift. Both their male partners habits (Des's drink and gambling, Mick's drink and drugs) are as significant as is their violence.

The justifications they first gave for embarking upon the activity of shoplifting are evidently only partial justifications for the women's more lengthy commitment to this choice of crime. Initial justifications are simply snapshot and static presentations that can be compared and contrasted with each other and with additional justifications offered at different points in time. A somewhat fuller analysis of the women's justifications is captured above. This shows how the women's individual explanations fluctuate and change and how they become more complexly layered over time.

Several representations of the economic continue to emerge. For Natasha, the economic was originally subsumed within her references to Des's influence. She named and presented Des as primarily responsible for her initiation into shoplifting and merely acknowledges the economic. Economic awareness is present but secondary. Over time Natasha's appreciation of the economic appears to become more acute. The economic not only appears more frequently but also, the ways in which she represents it are also more varied. The economic increases in import for Natasha as she becomes increasingly more aware of the advantages to her shoplifting not only for Des but also for herself and her family. She told me: *I'd provided for me kids through probably the worst times of their lives'*. For Claudia the economic was very soon apparent in her understanding of her doing of shoplifting but this was merged with references to her feelings of self-worth and how shoplifting was for her, an indicator of esteem. For Claudia, shoplifting continued to be a means by which she

could achieve some degree of success amongst those close to her. Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) analysis would be that shoplifting is her illegitimate route to success, her unorthodox path to achieve professional status. Over time, Claudia's appreciation of the economic does appear to become more acute but in the same way that Natasha's representation of the economic had originally been subsumed within her references to Des, Claudia presents a similarly blurred appreciation of how the economic is linked to her shoplifting. In the above, Claudia signifies Mick as partially culpable for her shoplifting.

At this point in the analysis of the women's more detailed post-hoc justifications for shoplifting 'need' and 'greed' are now both evident in some measure. For Claudia, 'need' is now more variously represented and shoplifting provides for several of her own and Mick's needs. Claudia provisions her own need for self-worth and in later years she fulfils a need to satisfy her partner Mick's needs for money for his *'drugs and drink'* habits, combined with her additional requirements or needs for peace for herself and her children. Thus greed is hardly apparent in these extracts. Claudia is busy shoplifting to variously provision her own, her partner and families needs whereas Natasha is now confessing need and greed. Greed is represented only marginally in Natasha's vocabulary above and this economic notion will be explored further below. Need however, is now variously represented. At least two types of need are apparent. One is a need that is almost literally forced: *'I had ter'* (Natasha) and *'I was sent out'* (Claudia). In both of these excerpts the two women are referring to pressure from their men that they are pushed into offending. The need to do shoplifting stems from their need to avoid unpleasantness, perhaps verbal, physical and/or psychological threats and actual harms to themselves and directly or indirectly

to their children. A second type of need is more directly economic in nature. This relates to need arising from hardship and economic want. For example, she needs to clothe her children, to provision the family, to ensure domestic survival and payment of bills.

This final layer of analysis of the representation of the economic brings the economic notion of 'greed' into sharper focus. Earlier in this chapter it was shown how shoplifting became a dominant activity in both Claudia and Natasha's lives and how both women exhibited some of the key hallmarks of professional shoplifters. The professional aspects of their shoplifting and presentation of themselves as shoplifters additionally illustrate however the economic drive is less in terms of 'need' and more in terms of 'greed'. Claudia and Natasha each became practised and confident shoplifters in their own right. The notion of becoming businesslike and the notion of doing illegal shopping are well illustrated in the earlier part of the chapter and are more fully captured from the perspective of their post-hoc justifications. The specific notion of shoplifting as an illegal enterprise that emphasises the notion of greed and gain is particularly well illustrated in Natasha's story.

(iv) Natasha's Illegal Business

The various themes illustrative of notions of the economic analysed in the earlier part of this chapter, include how the women become increasingly businesslike, how they do illegal shopping, how they learn and adopt the trade of shoplifting, how they have individual preferences and adaptations that make the craft specific to themselves, how they adopt specific means of handling and dealing with the 'hot products' in the

informal marketplace and how they work within criminal networks. Scrutinising Natasha's story for aspects of an illegal business only lends greater emphasis to the economic and to specific representations of the economic that ultimately lead to her apparent seduction by greed. A more detailed portrait of shoplifting as women's business could be explored in both Natasha and Claudia's stories. For brevity however, Natasha's illegal shopping is taken to illustrate this notion of an illegal business in greater depth. Details of this are provided under the following two headings first, learning, teaching and risk assessment and second seduction. These headings appropriately capture Natasha 's reflections on her lengthy commitment to shoplifting.

Learning, teaching and risk assessment

Previous parts of the analysis have amply demonstrated Natasha's determination to become a more practised, efficient and effective shoplifter leading to her professional status as such. The following section further emphasises these aspects of Natasha's commitment to shoplifting as an occupation. It shows strategism on Natasha's behalf. This strategising is increasingly geared towards decreasing any threats to the profitability of her enterprise by means of avoiding detection and arrest and embarking upon risk assessment techniques calculated to maximise her rewards.

Natasha's recollections of her shoplifting activities suggest she was keenly aware of shop security such as cameras and store detectives in particular. During the course of our first interview Natasha asked me:

Av you seen the yeller page advert that goes like that (fingers walking).? If yer want to inform yer mate, whoever yer with, that there's a walker on yer back yer do like the

yeller page advert without lettin, cos sometimes they're right behind yer. Yer just do that or like that (hand motion) as if yer goin out a door. Yer know what I mean? It's all about bottle. Shopliftin is all about bottle. You have got to have a brass neck.

Thus, Natasha describes how she learned to avoid being detected and arrested by being security aware and by adopting specific precautions. Moreover she describes some key characteristics necessary for the job. The job description of a professional shoplifter includes a person specification that requires a personality, as she put it, with '*brass*' and '*bottle*'.

Natasha also learned how to co-operate with Des in terms of *'good housekeeping'* practices as a property offender and shoplifter. Following a passing reference to '*good housekeeping'* I checked what she meant by this:

PD: *So you'd bring things back here?*

Natasha replied:

We would take it home and like the stuff we wanted that we wanted to keep we would take out all the boxes and everything and immediately put them on so that like if we ever got raided or anything……Yer get rid of the evidence straight away right. Yer get rid of the boxes and just dump it in the neighbours bin……Bring them in and out. Nothin was ever kept in the house for very long err. The most anything was ever kept in the house like I'd say would be like two days at the most, but I didn't like ter keep things in the house. And er. When you get caught. Yer allowed a phone call. So this time when we were caught at Stockton, me and-----. We said on the phone. 'We've been caught. We at Stockton can you come and pick the bairns up?' So ------- and Des said' Oh ay'e. I said 'Make sure the house is

clean', 'Oh right'. ' Yer know just in case anyone comes to look after the bairns while we out. Make sure that the house is clean……'. Got it well sussed.

Learning the tricks of the trade was not just achieved by serving her training directed by Des, but also by on the job training as our discussions around security and taking precautions emphasise. In addition, and as illustrated previously, Natasha's experience of imprisonment also added to her knowledge and expertise of shoplifting and enhanced her learning so she could become more skilled at her trade. Natasha also travelled specifically for the purpose of shoplifting. Once she had learned to drive legally and had passed her test - as funded from the proceeds from her shoplifting - Natasha told me: *Yeah so, once I was mobile then I could travel - have car will travel'.* She clearly also became increasingly confident about her ability to shoplift. She told me how versatile her shoplifting was: '*anything, anything I could pinch just so much stuff'* .

Natasha has not only nurtured her own proclivity for shoplifting but knowledge of her expertise spread locally amongst customers and contacts helping her to maximise her rewards from the business of shoplifting. She also uses her expertise to groom others. Here she talks about how demand had outstripped supply, about her increased confidence and how she took on an apprentice:

I couldn't cope on me own anymore I was doin so much stuff the amount of orders was just too much. So I recruited someone. I took her out. She was a friend she lived in the same street as me. I showed her like the general yer know like how to do it. How to pinch because by cos then I was quite good at it meself. I could do it and you

couldn't even tell I was doin it from behind cos I was just walking up and down I hadn't even stopped. Before I had to look up, by then I was confident to show her how to pinch in front of the cameras, security cameras. She started helping me.

The learning, constant doing and practising and then teaching of shoplifting, whilst constantly weighing up the pros and cons of any given shoplifting venture presents an emerging business-like strategy towards shoplifting as well as an increasingly strategic form of thinking and acting on Natasha's behalf.

Seduction – from getting to being greedy

Previous parts of the analysis have demonstrated the varied range of justifications and motivations for Natasha's shoplifting and have also demonstrated how these are often presented so they appear oscillating and contradictory. The following section further emphasises how alongside Natasha's emergent strategising, the inevitability of her seduction by shoplifting simultaneously unfolds. She becomes increasingly aware of her changing motivations and contradictory justifications, her growing greed and begins to take risks. It seems that although her partner first introduced her to the business of shoplifting, Natasha began not only to satisfy Des's demands through doing this type of crime but also very soon she reaped the benefits from it for herself and her children directly. She refers to doing it for her partner's benefit, to support her children and then of her own greedy appetite. Natasha told me how shoplifting became ever more habitual:

It was just too easy and the money it got it started off, with like stuff for him and then I thought I'll get some clothes and once I'd started getting the money for them I was going every day pinchin in ..... and I never got caught in.....I

didn't know I didn't look to the future I was doing it for the here and now at the time it was a way of givin the kids things I couldn't afford. I couldn't get a job cos I had a criminal record, cos I'd already been caught

And among the reasons given for doing shoplifting so regularly her own greed is acknowledged and increasingly features:

it started of with like stuff for him .....I didn't look to the future I was doing it for the here and now at the time it was a way of givin the kids things I couldn't afford..... it wasn't a means of supportin any more. Greed took over the more I did it the more greedy I got.....

The process of becoming business-like became increasingly inevitable as the orders continued to keep the business buoyant. Financial surpluses continued to make the enterprise thrive economically and this made the commitment to the doing of shoplifting all the more seductive for Natasha. She described the way in which shoplifting became variously rewarding and indispensable:

By then I'd saved up enough money, I'd moved house I'd done me house out nice, put nice things in it, spent money on buying meself, home, kids nice things. The money I was makin was goin towards things that I couldn't shoplift so the money I was making from shoplifting was goin towards things that I couldn't shoplift like sort for instance washing machines fridge-freezers yer know what I mean? I was savin money on the side but all the time I was doing it Des was takin his cut so if I took ten pounds worth and I'd got a tenner for me he'd have five I'd have five. So I was supporting his drinkin habit and gambling habit and a home. I did quite well I tell yer they say crime doesn't pay but it did then.....

Part of the process of Natasha becoming seduced by shoplifting as an economic crime also involved the risk assessment balance being tipped too far. Her greed became such that it appears to cloud her judgement about when to pull out and stop. She told me: *Anyhow I knew I was caught. I knew that but I was just so greedy and desperate for the money. I don't even know why I wanted the money and I just wouldn't put them back and Jenny was saying look we caught and I said No I'm not no way I've took them now. Anyhow sure enough we were caught.*

Ultimately she is totally seduced by the attractions offered via shoplifting. We witness the changing nature of her primary motivation for doing shoplifting. Originally motivated primarily by Des and financial need and necessity we witness Natasha adopting a more businesslike approach and the growth of her greedy appetite. This, together with the thrill, buzz and excitement of the whole business, takes over from the doing of shoplifting for basic survival and exclusively for provisioning purposes.

Departing from the main thrust of the materialist anomie theory, which assumes people are driven into crime through grim necessity, Natasha admits that part of the seduction is now related to the sheer excitement that comes alongside the reaping of financial reward. She told me: *I mean sometimes it did, it did get to us yer know what I mean but the thrill, the buzz of it when you know you've actually got away with it.* Cultural criminologists have elaborated upon how people doing crime often find pleasure in the act and in the risk taking (Katz 1988, Ferrell et al.1995, 1998). Katz's characterisation of shoplifting as a 'thrilling and satisfying game' (Katz 1988: 54) plays up the expressive, emotional and adventurous aspects of doing shoplifting successfully and persuasively suggests that crime is not always motivated by pain rather than pleasure.

The story of how Natasha became business-like towards shoplifting illustrates well how she made shoplifting her illegal enterprise. She admits to getting greedier and greedier. She makes the transition from learner and apprentice to skilled grafter and then teacher with acute business acumen whereby risks were calculated, bad practices eliminated and profits maximised. Her seduction by shoplifting is strengthened by the '*thrill*' and '*buzz*'. Ultimately shoplifting is presented as her economic and instrumental crime of choice with the fringe benefits of providing her with some excitement too.

(v) Conclusion

The above illustrates the complex and shifting nature of the explanations and justifications for shoplifting that the women rehearse. This comparative analysis is showing that several competing justifications for shoplifting emerge. Sometimes these justifications appear as oddly contradictory, especially when very closely juxtaposed, sometimes they appear to oscillate between similar justifications and sometimes several explanations coincide and become entangled and enmeshed. It becomes increasingly apparent that for these two women, for whom shoplifting has become an integral part of their lives, there are no simple or singular mono-causal explanations for their doing of shoplifting and to their long-term and at times full-time commitment to it.

The case study of Natasha and Claudia as professional shoplifters has specifically examined these women's initiation into shoplifting as well as their post-hoc

justifications for shoplifting and growing themes relating to the economic and in particular need and greed have been discovered. These representations of the economic further demonstrate how Natasha presents her shoplifting as an illegal occupation and business. Indeed themes related to the economic are increasingly seen to focus upon the notion of economic greed. We witness the seduction of Natasha by shoplifting as an economic crime.

The varieties of rewards from doing crime as work noted above and in Chapters Two, Six and Seven have rarely been researched. Measuring returns and rewards, whether they are calculable illegal wages, earnings and pay and/or other non-material rewards from illegal work is rare, but satisficing models suggest that non-material returns such as excitement or status (Katz 1988) may be an important consideration for those deciding how best to maximise rewards. Under such models access to non-material sources of social status and rewards, the roles of tastes, intrinsic rewards of the criminal life, emotional thrills and excitement all play a significant part in making the total rewards from doing crime as work intrinsically attractive as well as lucrative. Similar rewards appear significant to both Natasha and Claudia. Several years after having abandoned shoplifting as a form of work, Natasha became animated and excited as she told me of shoplifting events and episodes and she recalled many of these in a nostalgic manner. Claudia strongly implied that status type rewards encouraged her early shoplifting experiences and in later years her reputation in part prevented her stopping. Material and non-material rewards, combined with the many criminal justice labels and convictions all combine to prevent the abandonment of crime for legal work, encourage a 'doubling up' (Fagan and Freeman 1999) in legal and illegal work, active shifting between work and crime occupations, the frequent

crossing of legal boundaries and contribute to the increased blurring of what constitutes legal and illegal work. In this chapter shoplifting emerges as women's business and this raises several significant theoretical questions. These are examined in the following chapters.

CHAPTER EIGHT

NEEDY AND GREEDY?: THE ECONOMIC AND THE RATIONAL

(i) Introduction

In the previous three chapters there are a number of significant themes that demand continued analysis. In Chapters Six and Seven the meaning of the economic in relation to women's motives for and experience of doing crime for gain has been explored through an examination of how and why women do shoplifting. Women's appreciations and understandings of their own motives offer several representations and meanings of the economic, as evidenced in the complex, noticeably gendered vocabularies used by the women. These representations coexist with other interpretations and meanings of the economic, as shown in the variety of justifications employed by the women to explain or account for their doing of crime.

This chapter starts with a resume of the various literal meanings and interpretations of the economic. Having dissected the women's crime talk for their reference to and representations of the economic, these vocabularies are classified and prepared for further theoretical examination within the broader context of the criminological and political economy literature. Secondly, the chapter discusses how these literal meanings and allusions connect to the more detailed aspects of the women's motivations as evidenced from how and why they do their crimes. The classifications of the economic taken from the women's discussions are extensive and demand that the analysis include specific and detailed attention to the economic not only as terms

as narrowly related to crime but also to how the economic is more broadly, generally and traditionally understood and experienced by women.

(ii) Women's Representations of the Economic

My overall analysis is showing that women's awareness and appreciation of the economic is complex and multi-faceted. The women's discussions are effectively full of references to the economic. Sometimes the economic is foregrounded in their crime talk and it is starkly and acutely represented. In numerous instances the economic is related to money and pecuniary position, the economic is essentially financial in nature. Where the economic as money is foregrounded it is nevertheless diversely manifested. For example, Pauline told me '*I'd make money'*, Deborah told me she would '*sell on for money'*, and Kate and Natasha refer to the '*financial gains'* of shoplifting. Whilst the economic in some instances is immediately visible as strongly related to money, this masks a much more complex set of variations on the theme of the economic. In effect, the economic as money is no more than a shorthand way of expressing a much more complex combination of meanings.

Subsumed within the economic as money the variety of vocabularies drawn upon by the women demonstrates a keen and sophisticated appreciation of the economic. The economic is spoken of not only in simple terms as money meaning cash, pounds, shillings and pence, but also the economic emerges - as money - as business. The economic as business and as practical, shows women's appreciation of the economic in several ways including those related to material conditions outside of the home, to a non-domestic, non-household economy. Additionally, they know the operating costs

of home life and running a home. All the women, for example, know the legitimate purchase prices and illegal selling prices and values of goods handled. They also know how to operate within the market for stolen goods whether these goods are smuggled cigarettes, illegal drugs or shoplifted articles. They also know how to trade and provide services including the provision of illegal drugs and sex work. Similarly, as well as the profits side of their illegal deals and transactions they know the risks and costs of contributing to the local informal and criminal economics and of doing illegal work as business. The women take security precautions and several women told me about the outlay involved in trading illegally. Pauline and Brenda spoke about paying for petrol and for a driver, Natasha talks of how she recruited and trained a fellow co-worker to shoplift. Some of the women appear as capable business operators whilst others come across as workers. Nevertheless, women doing crime in these ways are representing the economic as business and as something outwith and beyond the domestic.

(iii) Motive and 'the Economic'

The ways in which women's shoplifting in particular (and to some extent drugs and sex work) is carried out are suggestive of rationalist modes of motivation. In particular the business, trade, job, work, occupation, career connotations are noted in Chapters Six and Seven where shoplifting is equated to grafting and grafting becomes akin to casual work. Some of the women, some of the time, especially Claudia, Pauline and Natasha, are doing more than just casual illegal work. These women's doing of shoplifting is suggestive of crime as a form of full time illegal work. In the informal and criminal economies 'doing the business', 'entrepreneurship' and

'enterprise' have become metaphors (Hobbs 1991) for crime, particularly professional and organised crime. Whilst Hobbs (1991) has illustrated various metaphors for crime others have similarly noted the distinct parallels between criminal and legitimate activities (Fagan and Freeman 1999). Motivational language also appears to be a common factor. What offenders do and how they do it is comparable to normal accounts of work experiences and roles and legal occupational characteristics. This can be seen particularly in men's accounts of burglary (Bennett and Wright 1984, Maguire 1982, Walsh 1986) and women's accounts of sex work (McKeganey and Barnard 1996, McLeod 1982). It is incongruous that it is necessary to turn to research on how and why men do burglary – rather than accounts of women as shoplifters, - yet expositions of burglary appropriately illustrate several parallels between how and why men do crime for gain, and how and why women do crime for gain.

Maguire (1982) points to three ways in which burglars enable themselves to see their activities as 'real work' and to portray their way of life as a rational form of behaviour geared towards financial profit. First, through the use of euphemisms (earnings, business, making a decent living'). Second, through the use of the career or profession analogy, indicating steady progress in terms of income, status, experience, all a part of learning the trade. Third, the use of language associated with the business world suggests they are acting in a rational-economic manner, adapting to changes in market forces, doing the business, trading. In other words, like some of the women in Chapter 6 and Claudia and Natasha, Maguire's burglars presented their doing of crime as rational in their own terms.

Maguire (1982), Walsh (1986), and Wright and Decker (1994) have approached the study of commercial burglary and robbery within a framework of crime as a form of work. Walsh's analysis is especially pertinent as it discusses burglary as a job. Indeed, the presentation of the findings is organised under a job specification where good health is essential to do the labour of burglary. Wages and conditions of work are reviewed, training and on the job apprenticeship are explored, as are the additional qualities and particular attitudes and abilities necessary for the job. Almost a decade later Wright and Decker (1994) similarly explored the working conditions of burglars, how they select and prefer certain targets, how they plan, execute and deal with the goods obtained through doing burglary. Wright and Decker (1994) found that most burglars are motivated by the need for cash and this is closely related to their desire to get 'high', to enjoy the good life and to party. Doing burglary is presented as a choice solution to their need to raise cash to do these things without having to do legal work. These accounts of burglary appear to reflect explanations couched in terms of greed and gain and dependency and hedonism. These burglars would also appear to demonstrate a particular form of rationalism. This rationalism mirrors how some women approach, describe and view their doing of a crime as a job of work, they do shoplifting in a work-like fashion and apparently make choice decisions. In other ways however, the rationalism evident in women's illegal shoplifting differs from the masculinist choice theoretical model. These particular aspects of the findings that connect the meanings of the economic in relation to women's experience of doing crime with notions of women's rationalism and agency are examined in more detail below.

Borrowing from the empirical work of male criminologists researching their male brethren (see for example Bennett and Wright 1984, Maguire 1982, Walsh 1986), seems useful in that there are some common features between some men who do burglary and some women who do shoplifting. Butler's empirical study found male offender's had a range of motives for doing commercial burglary (Butler 1994:32). Money had the greatest degree of influence with unemployment following as a very close second. Excitement, alcohol and drugs were the next three most significant motives with friends coming sixth on the list and family last of all. Thus, there are some clear similarities and differences between the men doing burglary and the women's motives and justifications for the doing of shoplifting, except that for men family motives were of little importance.

In apparent contrast the economic also emerges sometimes strongly, sometimes less so, as pertaining to household management and the economical management of the family and domestic sphere. For example, Kate, Pauline, Natasha, Claudia and Patricia's justifications enable us to appreciate both how complex their understanding of their motives is in respect of the economic and how they are well acquainted with some of the complex ways in which materialism and other economic factors impact upon their own lives. Each of the above, and several of the other women, admit to doing crime in part for their kids (Davies 2003b) or their partners and their families. They point towards their responsibilities and obligations to their families and friends all of which is suggestive of an economy of reliance or dependence. In such an economy the women are variously doing prostitution, drugs and sex work, property crime and shoplifting in particular, to some extent for the benefit for others. The

economic therefore emerges as familial and household related. Crime has become essential, a necessity in order to provide for others' needs, demands and desires.

In the detailed case studies, these subtleties and nuanced expressions and representations of women's understanding and appreciation of the economic are well illustrated. Claudia and Natasha's experiences of crime and allusions to motives connected to the economic are replete with direct and indirect references to money. Whilst there is evidence from interviewing Kate who shoplifted for 'extras' and 'luxuries' and who gave a full account of her long term commitment to prostitution, and from interviewing Patricia who admits to being a big drugs dealer, that possessional greed is part of the lure of shoplifting, prostitution and drug dealing, the economic as multi-faceted is clearest in the analysis of the case studies of Claudia and Natasha. It is here that shoplifting can be seen most explicitly as planned and organised work, as a career, as a profession or occupation and where shoplifting emerges as women's business.

In the previous two chapters, references to the economic are dispersed throughout the women's discussions and explanations of motivations for their crimes and criminality and the analysis demonstrates how the meanings of the economic oscillate between the economic as represented domestically in thrifty and needy terms, where the economic is related to being economical, and the economic as money making, business-oriented and money grabbing. Economic need however, can be variously interpreted. Economic need ranges through the need for money and/or the need to make money, economic want, poverty, hardship and marginalisation and relative poverty, to need that is more akin to economic greed, a greedy need for money and/or

drugs. The notion of the economic-as-business-as-profit, as buying and selling of goods and taking and meeting orders in the local economy for financial reward, benefit and gain is most commonly associated with the latter – economic greed - and with the additional perks of excitement and improved self-esteem occasionally being felt. The questions of whether the women are doing crime because they are needy or greedy appear to become increasingly complex.

At least three classifications of experiences and motives connected to the economic are revealed. First, and perhaps most simplistically and misleadingly, is the obvious articulation and statement of motives that connect to the economic as money, as pecuniary, as cash and finance. Second, the economic as household, housekeeping as thrift management and as familial in nature where women represent managers of the home and of the domestic and third, the economic beyond the household, the economic as business and profit, as making a living and where women are business operators and professionals not simply outside of the home in the criminal economy per se but in the fuzzy boundaries of the informal economy somewhere between or on the margins of the legal and the illegal marketplace. Increasingly evident is that these classifications are complex and varied. The women's experiences of, allusions to, motives connected to and representations of the economic vary not only in degree and intensity, but also change over time. The complex layers of women's understanding of the economic show how the women appreciate their motives and experiences in relation to themselves, their families and friends as well as in relation to the local and wider formal, informal and criminal economies. Their appreciations, understandings, experiences of and participation in the familial and relational, local and broader formal, informal, and criminal economies are evident yet difficult to fully capture and

adequately demonstrate in this written exposition. In order, at least in part, to further capture the women's motives and experiences and how these connect with various sophisticated articulations of the economic I now explore some of the details and nuances within the classifications of the economic as money, the economic as household and familial and the economic beyond the household as business and profit.

Money, Familial and Business Motivations

In Chapter Five, I described Maureen and Deborah's most recent crimes. They might be classified as professionals and their criminality loosely falls within the organised crime category. Maureen, a mother of three was interviewed in the community whilst on a one-year probation sentence for handling of stolen goods. This offence was linked to a more serious and complex case of conspiracy to steal and ring cars along with a group of about 20 others. Maureen had helped to falsify the car logbooks and fill in forms and documents, as her writing was more convincing and neater than her partners. She did it for the money and the dominant economic model appears to be 'greed and gain'. This was a set of offences that involved several people to establish and maintain the criminal business. Maureen claimed that:

'*He asked me to do it. I knew it was wrong but did it.....there was no pressure on me I wasn't forced. He asked me to do it and I did it'*.

Maureen is referring to the man she lived with, her fiancé and partner of 10 years and his garage business. This manifestation of the economic is business-oriented and best fits the 'greed and gain' model as explored in the previous chapter. However, the greed and gain is both self-oriented, to benefit Maureen herself, and partner or mutually-oriented, to fulfil her partner's and their joint greed and gain. In addition to

the professional and organised aspects of Maureen's criminality, the fraudulent nature of her offending adds to the sense in which her crime is an 'economic crime'.

Deborah, also a mother of three, was interviewed in the community whilst on a one-year probation sentence for smuggling cigarettes. Reliant on income support and child benefit, divorced and living with her boyfriend, a mechanic, Deborah spent her time at home and looking after her children. Options for increasing her income and bettering her lifestyle, similarly to Maureen, were linked to her personal and close relationships with her partner, friends and local social networks. Deborah's crime was conducted with her boyfriend and another couple. The two couples went abroad three times to smuggle cigarettes into the country. They took empty suitcases to -------- and brought them back full with 60,000 cigarettes in each case. Their contraband cigarettes were undeclared at customs and were subsequently sold on in the informal marketplace through word of mouth via friends for cash. Deborah's economic situation was relatively poor and she told me she did this for the money yet the economic 'need and necessity' does not seem to be most fitting here. Deborah's part in the repeat offences was rationally thought out and planned and she personally enjoyed the benefits of taking part in them. Deborah's approach to doing her crime therefore also appears to be motivated by 'greed and gain'.

Maureen's part in offences related to motor vehicle crime and Deborah's role in smuggling fits with some of the hallmarks of professional and organised crime. Maureen's contribution to the illegal car business was clearly seen by the courts as a relatively serious crime. The criminological literature on car crime typically distinguishes between different types of car crime notably between theft for transportation or for temporary personal use and for resale - for chopping or stripping

cars for parts - that is, for profit (Tremblay et al.1994, Corbett 2003). Sometimes this distinction is put more starkly so that on the one hand motivations for the doing of car crime are linked to leisure and pleasure, boredom and excitement and on the other to crude financial instrumentalism. The latter category of car crime for profit where the motivation is for monetary gain tends to be further sub-divided. There are those that are characterised by their professional and business-like organisation. This sub-set is similar to Foster's (1990) 'real' villains (division one) in the 'league division of villainy'. These professionals are often linked to garages that do illegal car business including 'cut 'n' shuts' or 'chop shops'. These professionals will often be involved in stripping vehicles of their parts, repainting and generally preparing them for selling on. Their activities constitute an illegal business and those engaged have links to criminal economies at local, national international and, increasingly, global levels via export rings. At the other end of the scale are those which are amateur and correspond to 'league division three villainy' (Foster 1990:15).

If a professional criminal is someone who makes a living from the doing of crime, uses some degree of expertise and tends to specialise in one particular type of criminal activity (Geis 1974, Sutherland and Conwell 1937) then Maureen's part in the illegal car business has several of the key hallmarks of professionalism. Maureen fits Carlen's (Carlen 1988) definition of professional crime as discussed in Chapter 6 and she appears to specialise in a niche area, a key part in a larger criminal business, she has a distinct and functional organisational role (Levi 1981). Her offending is typical of many professional forms of crime, and in this respect her part in crime is similar to Deborah's, in that it is linked with organised crime.

The majority of the women gave immediate and additional motivations and explanations for their crimes (as indicated in Table 6.2 in Chapter Six) and the qualitative data confirms that women's motivations are multiple rather than singular in nature. Claudia and Natasha's reasons for doing their specialist forms of professional shoplifting are also shown as multiple, non-linear and complex in nature. Women give several reasons or justifications for their crimes and criminality and sometimes these are presented as apparently contradictory in nature. At any given time one exclusive justification may or may not predominate. Thus, sometimes, for example, Natasha said, '*I had ter*'. This could be interpreted – in the fuller context of the interview transcript – as meaning she had to because her partner was cajoling or forcing her and she was frightened into criminal activity by him and/or because of her duties as his partner and/or because she felt she had little choice because of her parental and motherly responsibilities, that is to feed and clothe herself and her children, to provision her partner and family and their needs and/or to provision her neighbours and friends. It could also be interpreted in terms of shoplifting as a habit, as an activity to which she has become fully and totally committed over time. In other words, she *had to* because she would be daft not to in the light of the benefits and rewards, gain and profits they make from doing it.

Claudia and Natasha variously exemplify each of these 'reasons' for doing shoplifting. They had become so enmeshed in the local informal market and criminal economy, they *had to* for others' sakes as well as for themselves in order to maintain the status and respect they had achieved amongst friends, kinship networks and the local community. This single, simple phrase '*I had ter*' typifies - albeit in a shorthand way - the 'economic dilemmas' many of the women find themselves within. Indeed

the notion of an 'economic dilemma' captures a range of material, structural and gendered intersections that women experience, exist within and contribute to. At these intersections or overlaps, junctures even, women variously present themselves as trapped or escaping women. The women largely connected and committed to shoplifting through a dependency on drugs for example might be seen as 'trapped' within a cycle of grafting and scoring, grafting and scoring. Yet perhaps even this should not be taken at such simple face value. Whilst caught or trapped by drugs and the attractions of their hedonistic qualities, including the temporary escape from the realities of their impoverished lives and livelihoods, there is little evidence to suggest that these same women become totally abandoned through drugs or fully succumb to hedonism. In effect, as Kate and Patricia specified in Chapter Six, they continue to acknowledge their provisioning duties and responsibilities. Indicative of such complex economic dilemmas is that, on the one hand, Natasha and Claudia appear trapped by their needy men and perhaps their families and neighbours. On the other hand, shoplifting for Claudia and Natasha and shoplifting, sex and drugs work for other women can become a means of escape from violence and threats, male domination and power, and materialistic need. Criminality represents a compelling and attractive invitation to succeed materially and familially.

Fleeing Need or Flight to Greed?

Claudia and Natasha particularly indicate these twin notions of escaping and being trapped. Both appear to get 'trapped' into the habit or the 'job' of shoplifting. For Claudia this happened very early in her shoplifting career as a schoolgirl. As her shoplifting career advanced, Claudia becomes trapped within her relationship with her violent and abusive partner, the father of her children, her socio-economic circumstances and in the combined effects of both. She also becomes confirmed as a

shoplifter or 'stocktaker' by the criminal justice system and in turn she is trapped within the confines of her familial and social networks and environment. This is an environment where there are pub landlords on the fiddle, fences and other activities typical of an informal and criminal economy. Similar to being trapped in a cycle of deprivation, Claudia appears to be trapped in an illegitimate career, trapped within criminal networks and the informal and criminal marketplace. Claudia reiterated the feeling of entrapment she referred to at the very start of her shoplifting career once again towards the close of our second interview:

> *Even though I'm no longer active its still there……The circle I'm in my peers, friends, the area, my record……I'm still offered stuff. If I'm asked what I do I'm Claudia the stocktaker. The downs are worse than the ups of being a criminal.*

She claims her individual responsibility is strongly affected by her social position and environmental factors. These latter points suggest that Claudia might be somewhat less culpable for her shoplifting and somewhat less blameworthy than a superficial analysis would suggest. Her story presents mitigating circumstances and suggests she may be more acted upon than acting in persisting to shoplift.

Natasha became ensnared into the business during her twenties. In part at least, other people spurred Claudia and Natasha on in the business of shoplifting. For Claudia, it was initially her school friends who ensnared and spurred her on. Natasha believes it was the pressure of neighbours, friends, friends of friends and co-working shoplifters that ensured she remained tied to the activity and trapped within the business of illegally obtaining and distributing stolen goods through shoplifting, although clearly her partner Des was also partially responsible for keeping her tied to the activity.

Customers and the demands made by them for specific types of goods kept Claudia's and Natasha's separate businesses booming. By taking orders and through the snowballing of their contacts, Claudia and Natasha became locked into their respective habits and trades.

In addition to feeling and evoking a sense of being trapped in a life of shoplifting, a different and oddly opposite reading or discourse also emerges in respect of this activity for Claudia and Natasha. Shoplifting is an escape route for Claudia and a source of pride for Natasha and Claudia. Claudia took pride in making her chosen specialist activity of shoplifting something she excelled at and became renowned for. From an early age, she realised it had its obvious rewards – immediate goods and the means to obtain money – but it also had other non-economic rewards. Claudia soon realised that by being good at shoplifting she could earn herself financial rewards but also equality, esteem, regard and self-confidence. As a schoolgirl she was quick to play out her newly assigned role, quick to develop, nurture and improve her standing as a good shoplifter. Shoplifting is effectively characterised in terms of a resource to which Claudia has easy and unrestricted access. As a teenager she discovered shoplifting gave her the means to escape being ordinary and less than equal to her peers. Shoplifting became the thing she practised and what she did; her ambitions were concerned with becoming better than anyone else at shoplifting. In the process she became defined by her most rewarding activity, she became a shoplifter. This labelling as a shoplifter happened at an early stage in her shoplifting career, was confirmed later on by her peers (the stocktaker) and also officially by the criminal justice system. As suggested in Chapter Seven, Claudia's commitments to and motivations for shoplifting are sometimes dominated by her need for self-worth.

Throughout her lifetime Claudia appears to have 'innovated' to achieve standing and success amongst her peer groups. She does so through doing shoplifting which becomes her alternative means of achieving success (cf. Cloward and Ohlin 1960).

A second way in which Claudia's shoplifting is an escape activity is more familiar. In the late twentieth century justifications for many of the activities of criminal women suggest to the need to better understand and appreciate the material and economic circumstances of women and that their crimes and criminality be understood in the context of their marginalisation and poverty. Claudia's story confirms her motives for doing crime for gain must be considered in such contexts and she expresses this herself explaining that she '*had to graft*'. She makes a distinction between '*professionals and those* (who steal) *for survival*' suggesting she was shoplifting for the latter reason for survival. According to her own story survival covers two issues. There is survival in the material sense '*I was shoplifting to feed the kids and for the money*' but also survival also in a more literal physical and emotional sense. In this discourse of survival, shoplifting's rewards offer Claudia escape from the violence and abuse of her partner. Claudia's shoplifting was the means by which she could appease her partner Mick. She used it not only as a resource for achieving materialistic rewards and non-economic success but also as a resource that enabled her and her children to be left in relative peace. Her specialist activity was now how she was commonly known within the local informal and criminal economies but she learned that it was useful to her in managing her more private and personal relationship with Mick. Shoplifting had become a skill on which she could always draw, a full or part-time activity or job to which she can always turn to and which she always has at her disposal.

Like Claudia, Natasha's shoplifting provides an escape and as with several of the other women interviewed, Natasha's shoplifting abilities and proficiency enables her to eke out a living and provide for the whims and habits of partners. However, the ways in which Natasha appears to be using shoplifting as a form of escape throw up some obvious contradictions in stated justifications and reasons for doing this activity. Natasha oscillates between describing shoplifting as a solution to her and her family's survival needs and as a means to satisfy her greed and her ambitions for financial and materialistic gain.

It seems that although her partner first introduced her to the business of shoplifting Natasha not only satisfied Des's demands through doing this type of crime but very soon she also reaped the benefits from it for herself and her children directly. Furthermore, she appears to move from being motivated by Des and financial need and necessity to being motivated by the buzz and excitement of the whole business and greed at times takes over from basic survival. There is an underlying current in Natasha's story that suggests Natasha has also been innovative in her career as a shoplifter. At times she appears more pro-actively motivated into shoplifting than pushed into stealing and it is apparent that shoplifting represents not just an escape route but also something she is increasingly drawn towards and attracted to. She moves beyond the confines of victimhood where as a female shoplifter she acts out the typical female crime doing-femininity, doing-motherhood and effectively doing-gender. She moves increasingly away from motives predominantly associated with economic altruism and her motives increasingly speak of her desire for financial

success. She is at least in part, wilfully doing crime for economic gain; she is doing crime for herself for more selfish purposes.

Claudia and Natasha appear to be escaping from conformity and obscurity, but many of the other women also appear to be acting purposefully, escaping economic want in terms of poverty, need and economic marginalisation and their economically strained domesticity. In their descriptions of how and why they do crime and criminality the women might be seen as facing up to and confronting their varied economic dilemmas whether these be connected to theirs and others diverse economic needs or theirs and/or others diverse economic greed. The notions of being trapped and escaping are highlighted here as illustrative of the diverse ways in which women are positioned in relation to their economic dilemmas and as an entry point into a fuller discussion on women's agency and women's rationality. Before exploring these issues in greater depth however, a summary position on economic motivations is offered.

(iii) Economic Motivations

In exploring women's motives for doing shoplifting and other crimes for gain at their broadest and most generalised as well as at their most detailed and nuanced level, a variety of economic concepts are demonstrated. In Chapter Two, I suggested that motives for doing economic crime might be collapsed into common groupings of motivations linked to survival and need as well as greed, gain and power and that within the literature these groupings tended to become gendered. The latter grouping of greed, gain and power was identified as most routinely attributed to men's and boy's offending patterns and motivations whilst those motivations linked to economic survival and need were identified as most characteristically employed by feminist

commentators (see for e.g. Campbell 1993, Carlen and colleagues 1985, 1987, 2004, and Carlen 1988 – 2002, Pantazis 1999) to explain women's doing of crime. Both of these generic categorisations and all of these motivations for doing economic crime are represented in the analysis of my empirical data and it seems that additional interpretations of women's motivations to offend materialistically are in evidence. Below I present a four fold categorization of different economic concepts arising from women's motivational accounts, the first two of which are most clearly feminist. Although each is presented as separate and distinct from one another the women who engage in similar and different forms of economic crime frequently feature under more than one of the categorisations. Each of the four motivational categories gives rise to different understandings and appreciations of the economic. The categories are named and briefly described below.

1. **Need and Necessity.** These motivations are related to basic survival, for example when women provide for themselves and their children. In this category criminal women feed and clothe themselves and generally sustain their immediate family. Feminist economists (Ferber and Nelson 1993) refer to this as economic '***provisioning***'. Within criminology this categorisation is mostly used in connection with criminal women whose criminality is largely determined and explained by economic marginalisation and the feminisation of poverty theses (Campbell 1993, Carlen and colleagues 1985, 1987, 2004, and Carlen 1988 – 2002., Cook 1989, Currie 1985, Pantazis 1999, Wilson and Herrnstein 1985). Closely related to this is a second category:

2. **Exploitation and Oppression.** This category is essentially materialist where exploitation and oppression is seen as key to explaining individuals or group's economic position. Women's pathways into crime are intrinsically linked to men, patriarchy, and hegemonic masculinity. Within feminist materialist criminology, male power and domination, men and masculinist traditions are seen to push women into particular forms of criminal activity.

3. **Greed and Economic Gain.** In this category the desire for economic rewards and material possessions attracts offenders to crime. In Weberian terms this is instrumental rationality. This category is typically represented within criminology as the *rational choice* perspective.

4. Supplying a need based on **Dependency, Addiction, Habitual drug-taking.** The dependency category foregrounds an addiction to, dependency on or need for drugs or alcohol – hence as the title for this category suggests the meaning of dependency here is specifically related to a drug or alcohol habit. Although elements belonging to other economic categories are likely to feature alongside this category, it is the dependency that is uppermost in fuelling economic criminality and hence this separate category is included.

Four concepts of the economic therefore either emerge from the qualitative interviews and/or confirm the categorisations as they exist in the literature referred to above and more fully in Chapter Two in connection with women's motivations. Few of the women interviewed display motivations that fit neatly or easily into one single category. The justifications for the crimes women do tend to fall within a mix of these

categories. Nevertheless in presenting a four-fold categorisation of the different economic concepts evident in the empirical data, this allows the analysis to capture the women's varying degrees and forms of rationalism and the categories are presented as potentially useful for analytical purposes. They are directly derived from the economic crimes women do and the crimes women do can be mapped onto the categories.

This chapter has examined the notions of need and greed in some detail. Whilst need and greed would normally be presented as oppositional and dichotomous motivations to do crime it is clear from this analysis that need and greed are often juxtaposed and presented as co-existing explanations either for the same criminal incident or for thefts occurring during the same period of time. Thus, this analysis seeks to transcend a dichotomy between need and greed and moves beyond the question of determining *either* need *or* greed preferring to work within more blurred confines where need and greed merge. The remainder of this chapter continues to work within the confines of need and greed. It also considers whether previous assumptions related to the gendering of motivations to do crime for gain may need revision. The analysis therefore continues to explore the notions of need, necessity and greed.

Need and Necessity

In 1993 feminist economists Ferber and Nelson edited a collection of essays entitled, *Beyond Economic Man. Feminist Theory and Economics.* They challenge the traditional and dominant presentation and application of neo-classical economics and take issue with the way in which choice theory and the market have variously come to define what economics is all about. They suggest that economic analysis tends to be

dominated by assumptions of free individual choice where individual human action is governed by rational action in the search for optimum rewards and maximum gains and choice theory has become equal to economic theory. Their project sought to engage feminist perspectives within the discipline of economics.

These arguments are very similar to my critiques in Chapter Two where the notion of economic crime is explored in relation to the market (see for e.g. Taylor 1999, Currie, 1997) and where the economic-as-market is generally subjected to a critical review. However, the rational choice model and masculinist rationalism has proven to be remarkably durable within criminological work and whilst the rational choice model has been critiqued from within criminology for its refusal to allow the actor to have a social identity or disposition and for ruling out key questions such as who offenders are, what they think and how they act (Taylor 1999), there appears nevertheless to have been a tacit acceptance of the classical utilitarian definition of the market. Criminological critiques have tended to see the rational choice perspectives become more refined and sensitive but as Rock points out they are '*tied to the apron strings of economics'* (Rock 1997: 260).

Interestingly, as part of her critique of economics, Nelson (1996) reproduces a table entitled 'The Contemporary Definition of Economics' (see Table in 7) which illustrates hierarchical dualisms and she also stresses how dominant cultural understanding associates men and masculinity with being public, active and rational and women and femininity with being private, passive, and emotional (Nelson 1996:23). Folbre (2001) claims that the separate spheres doctrine is appealing to economists for the following reasons:

> *It relieved them of the responsibility for analysing love and altruism, while reiterating their principles of morality. It excused them from considering the economics of family life, without suggesting that this aspect of life was unimportant. Most conveniently, the separate spheres doctrine helped men explain just why they should be self interested, while women should be altruistic. It was, for them, a comfortable way of seeking the best of both worlds*
>
> (Folbre 2001: 13).

Ferber and Nelson and others' (see Folbre 1994, Mellor 1992, 1997, Nelson 1996) critiques of unitary models of economics, of conceptions of the economic as an extant form, of rational choice, rational economic man, the choice theoretic and the market, articulate why all variants of the rational choice model where masculinist paradigms of wealth and market power dominate, are an anathema to women's view of the world. Women's experiences of economic life are hidden in such models of economics and their disadvantage in markets and in their families remains obscured from view whilst masculine mythologies and biases are maintained and reproduced. Women's ways of knowing are not voiced (Gilligan, 1982; Harding 1991). Most feminist positions have some measure of dispute with the assumption that we all make choices in a process of rational optimisation (Ferber and Nelson 1993: 61) and certainly women do not easily or comfortably fit into disembodied views of how society operates. Women are more likely to identify themselves through family relations rather than as separate detached and emotionally disconnected from others.

More specifically, Nelson considers economic provisioning[10], '*the study of the basis of human material welfare'* (1993: 145), as a more appropriate focal point. Economic provisioning is concerned with all necessities and conveniences that sustain and improve life and provisioning of human life involves focussing on the commodities and processes necessary to human survival. Economic provisioning is concerned with concrete issues related to the actual social and natural environment rather than with abstract analysis of hypothetical choice (Nelson 1996:131). Its pioneers also contend that the concept of economic provisioning addresses the social reality that women's economic position differs from the economic reality faced by men. An economic provisioning system denotes much more than '*an intention to simply broaden the concept of 'real-life' economics*' so that it is inclusive of community and domestic provision whilst the economy remains an 'extant form' (Mellor 1997: 134). Many commentators have pointed out women's domestic, subsistence and care giving work is unpaid and undervalued (see Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003, Fagan and Freeman 1999, Folbre 1994, 2001, Malos 1980, Waring 1989). Those who have taken up the notion of economic provisioning (See Mellor 1997) or pioneered the case for representing family values of love, obligation, and reciprocity (Folbre 1994, 2001) claim that provisioning recognises the social costs of reproduction and that it is able to contend with the reality that women are often concerned with subsistence and care giving work and that women's economic position differs from the economic reality faced by men.

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[10] Provisioning is not a new term. It is simply a different and older definition of economics

(iii) Explaining Economic Crime through Need and Greed

Need and necessity (1), greed and gain (3) are only two of the four classifications that loosely depict women's justifications and explanations of why they do materialist crimes. The other two classifications of exploitation (2) and dependency/habit (4) are characterised as closely related and often overlapping with either one or both of these two classifications. The various allusions to, meanings of and categorisations of the economic that are subsumed within both of the categories of need and necessity and exploitation might be re-interpreted so that the crimes that women do and the ways in which they do them are interpreted in provisioning terms (1 + 2). If economic provisioning is concerned with all necessities and conveniences that sustain and improve life and if the provisioning of human life involves focussing on the commodities and processes necessary to human survival, this fittingly describes the circumstances in which some women do crime and why some women do shoplifting and other frauds, thefts, prostitution and drugs offences, some of the time. Necessities, conveniences, sustenance, commodities and processes as defined by these women relate to their own, their parental and motherly responsibilities to feed and clothe herself and her children, provisioning partners and immediate family's needs, demands and desires as well as those of other kin, neighbours, friends and other members of the local community.

The women's doing of crime in provisioning terms is clearly evident. They are literally providing for themselves and others and altruistic motives and female rationalism are foremost as the women appear to be seeking and conspiring how best

to manage their own and their family's day-to-day existence. Provisioning through crime and through shoplifting in particular is a daily means of escaping from want and need, one of the myriads of ways in which women manoeuvre within their economic dilemmas and the close confines of economic hardship and poverty. This presentation, understanding and appreciation of women who do crime is seen in women's initial and post-hoc justifications for the doing of their crimes and this aspect of their explanations sees women's needs in terms of welfare needs and in terms of women's needs being familial and motherly. Under a provisioning model women's needs are entirely contextualised in family, partnership and in motherhood and in community. Women's needs also include men's needs and desires, wants and greed and women appear to extend their responsibilities and obligations to provide not only food and clothing but also the wherewithal to fulfil the gambling, alcohol and drug habits of others. Beneficiaries of women provisioning though crime include herself, those within the immediate household and domestic environment and those in close proximity such as neighbours, friends, co-workers and customers all of whom are in receipt of materials and commodities and non-economic rewards necessary for modern day survival. Thus, necessities, sustenance and commodities for survival appear to include basic human needs arising from dependencies and habits characteristic of late modern society including drink and drugs. Women who help to sustain and finance such complex needs operate predominantly within the environs of an economy of reliance, responsibility and obligation rather than an illegal or legal economy of profit-maximisation.

However, the analysis in previous chapters also demonstrates shoplifting and prostitution in labour terms where crime and work co-exist along a continuum where

crime is sometimes akin to work (Davies 1999, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c), even an alternative to work and professional aspects of the women's crimes are evident as they describe occupational traits, skills and commitments. In Chapters 6 and 7 shoplifting emerges as an activity that many women, Claudia and Natasha in particular, would plan and organise in advance. It is noted how they took steps to avoid detection and arrest, engaged in risk assessment strategies and generally adopted shoplifting strategies geared towards best practice. As I have also noted, male property offenders including household and commercial burglars and robbers as well as other professional offenders engage in strategies that demonstrate similar forms of rationalism and similarly enhance their chances of success and reduce their failure rate (Gill 1998, 2000, Gill and Matthews 1994, Maguire 1982, Matthews 2004).

Women doing white-collar crime might be expected to have very rational and men-like motivations for doing such forms of criminality and I have briefly analysed some of the crimes women do in the context of organised, professional and white-collar crime. However, many questions in respect of women doing white-collar crime for economic gain shall remain unanswered and my conclusions as regards women engaging in such types of criminality and their needs, necessities and greed's remain largely speculative. Arguably, it remains the case that in terms of criminal opportunity, although women are now to be found in senior positions in the professions, the gender split between those in high status and low status jobs generally persists. White collar and high management careers in the primary labour market continue to be followed by men with women and other minorities being over represented in the secondary labour market where blue-collar and service sector jobs are typical (Macionis and Plummer 1997). Thus, whilst women's criminal

opportunities might have broadened and improved and have generally expanded into the area of white-collar crime and offending since Sutherlands' day, the notion of an emancipated white-collar world of criminal opportunity and the notion of white-collar professions offering equal opportunity illegal employment is probably mythical. White-collar and blue-collar crime and occupational crime generally appears to remain male dominated with female participation in business and occupational crime low and less serious (Levi 1994). The scant data in my own analysis supports some of these suppositions.

The attention paid by criminologists and victimologists to women as professional and white-collar criminals and victims has gone little further than to draw attention to a clear gender patterning in respect of perpetrators and victims of employee thefts, frauds, embezzlements and commercial and political briberies, 'scandals' and misconducts (Croall, 1999a; 1999b; 2001; 2003; Davies, forthcoming: Levi, 1994; Szockyj and Fox 1996; Weisburd et al., 2001) and all such scholars agree that more empirical research is needed to settle the numerous gender questions in respect of white-collar, business and enterprise crime. However, and as Goldstraw's work in progress suggests, there are likely at least two categories of women involved in white-collar crime: those who, from a humanitarian/needs-based perspective generally commit the offence for economic or family reasons, and those who, from a more instrumental perspective commit crime for greed, ego and self esteem and whose accounts are not dissimilar to those given by male offenders (Goldstraw, 2002; 2003).

Additionally, sex work for women, like shoplifting, is illustrative of the notion of the economic-as business-as money, as well as the economic-as work-as employment.

Cathy and Kate's involvement in prostitution was described to me in ways that mimicked how men and women might describe their legitimate work or their occupation. Like Claudia and Natasha they described their regular commitment to their criminal occupation, their hours of work, their pay and rewards and some of their reasons for doing it are similar to those that anyone might give for working or making a living. Whilst Cathy's nightly earnings from prostitution supported her own problematic drug use as well as that of her boyfriend (also her pimp), Kate presented herself as a self-managed sex worker in control of her own money and finances during both her phases of prostitution. More so than Cathy, Kate appeared to be on a route to self-determination via prostitution. Similar to McLeod's (1982) women, the few women in my own sample who discussed prostitution saw it as ordinary and inevitable criminal work (See Chapter 2). Throughout the 1990's female sex workers have reaffirmed the notion of prostitution as sex work (Phoenix 1999, Hoigard and Finstad 1992, Maher 1997, Matthews 1993, Scrambler and Scrambler 1997, McKeganey and Barnard 1996) and research has emphasised that women become prostitutes for many of the same reasons that women get legitimate jobs, to have financial independence and therefore some control of their lives (Butcher and Chapple 1996). Such evidence lends weight to a feminist view that sex work is a route to self-determination rather than a form exploitation and sexual slavery.

However, despite having clearly rationalistic motivations for doing prostitution such as saving up capital which yields a return and investing in permanent properties, Hoigard and Finstad (1992) found that the vast majority of their sample actually spent their money on daily maintenance and characteristically hedonistic goals such as partying. Their alternative career did not appear to lift women out of a life of poverty.

Similarly, Carlen's (1988) criminal women were reported to find the financial benefits of their crimes as transient. Money earned through a variety of economic crimes including shoplifting and prostitution was spent on children's needs, on debts, bills, or lost to their drug addiction. None claimed that they had been lifted out of poverty. They remained providers and provisioners of others and whilst doing so they engaged in hedonistic social activities that made their lifestyle more bearable on a day-to-day basis. The fairly sparse evidence I have gathered about women doing sex work supports the conclusions of the authors above. However, despite women sometimes claiming to do prostitution in self-deterministic fashion, the end result is often rather different. Greeds turn into needs and necessities and the women remain providers and provisioners of others.

Thus even when women do recognise the economy-as employment and take part in shoplifting, prostitution, white-collar crimes and even when women do exhibit professionalism and partake in organised crimes, (see Chapters Six and Seven) to a greater or lesser extent they still remain tied to the apron strings of provisioning and do crime-as provisioning rather than using crime as employment to become instrumental profit-maximisers and entrepreneurs. Women appear for the most part to be strategising and resisting their provisioning dilemma through doing crime as part-time work. Their strategising and resisting amounts to the provisioning of human life, doing crime provides at least a temporary escape from their immediate provisioning dilemma. Even where it is evident that women determinedly engage in the doing of crime as work there is still a strong sense in which they are provisioning others. This is witnessed in how they took orders despite not widely advertising their willingness to do so and in the way Natasha said she had to do crime for other's sakes. Natasha's

provisioning role became increasingly more business-like but nevertheless her methods of provisioning were taken to extremes as her children and their pushchairs were used in the process of her shoplifting and her doing of this crime became almost a family effort and family business.

Further evidence that adds to the sense in which women do crime akin to work-as provisioning is found in an examination of who benefits. The beneficiaries of women provisioning though crime include herself and those within the immediate household and domestic environment and those in close proximity such as neighbours, friends, co-workers and customers all of whom are in receipt of materials and commodities necessary for modern day survival. Thus women appear under the provisioning (1 + 2) classification as workers rather than profit-maximisers and entrepreneurs. Rather than approximating a motivational mode where the economic is employment - a masculinist, constructed by and for men model - women's criminal work is hidden from view. If women were forced to fit this motivational mode they might find themselves simply bolted on as female workers, doing illegal work in stereotypically feminine fashion.

According to conventional, even feminist analysis women who are motivated to do material crimes are skilled and professional providers. Women on the whole commit crime as partners and wives – for their men – and as mothers for their children. Women commit crime in the name of the family, and they do so to feed, clothe, provide for and sustain a family and their relationships. Thus crime for women is routinely characterised as something done for other people's benefits (Davies 2003a, 2003b). However, this does not preclude women from doing crime at least in part for

self-satisficing reasons. Claudia claims respect from her grafting as does Natasha and several other women also claim to have earned esteem and non-economic rewards and benefits through doing economic crimes. Some of the women claim professional status for themselves and some admit to further subsidiary satisfactions from the tension, excitement, buzz, challenge and enjoyment of the risk factor of shoplifting (Katz 1988).

An important point, then, is that an analysis that sees women provisioning through crime exclusively in altruistic and selfless, obligatory, other-oriented terms is not wholly satisfactory. My data and unfolding analysis clearly demonstrates that many criminal women appear to oscillate between doing crime as justified according to need and necessity and doing crime because it is attractive for other reasons such as greed, profit-maximisation, status and other seductive or satisficing reasons. An analysis that stops with the assumption that women are motivated to do crimes such as shoplifting and prostitution exclusively for need or gives the over-riding impression that women's offending can be almost entirely attributed to economic need and necessity (Campbell 1993, Carlen and colleagues 1985, 1987, 2004, and Carlen 1988 – 2002, Cook 1989, 1997) falls short of a full and comprehensive appreciation of what women do and why. There are other nuances to women's motivations and emergent threads that suggest women are in part, occasionally, exclusively or jointly motivated, by greed. Indeed, women might be sometimes guilty of over-provisioning, crossing some vague and indistinct boundary line between need and greed. Some women appear to be borrowing from the boys and men and doing crime as employment. They appear to be motivated in accordance with beliefs and ambitions associated with the neo-classical models of the economic-as-market where, as Mellor (2003:15) puts it: '

'Economic man': a hot-shot, a wheeler-dealer, main-chancer' holds sway. However, as Mellor also notes,

> *'Economic Man' can be female. Many women have two lives: one within the money economy as workers, consumers, professionals, and one without, the world of women's work in the home and community.*
>
> (Mellor, 2003:15)

But, and as argued above, even where women appear to approximate what men and boys do through shoplifting or sex work as opposed to burglary or robbery, or where women appear to mimic the ways in which men and boys do their crimes of choice in professional and skilled ways, for the most part women do not appear to be motivated primarily by the need to become economic man.

(iv) Women's Agency and Rationalism

The previous chapter addressed Claudia and Natasha's shoplifting as an illegal occupation and business. It showed how they made shoplifting their specific profession concluding that shoplifting is their economic and instrumental crime of choice. These case studies and Chapter 6 generally illustrate differences in degrees of pro-activity, rational thought and planning associated with shoplifting and other crimes. Following this and alongside the arguments explored above in respect of women provisioning through crime it would seem appropriate to explore the notion of how women appear to engage in 'over-provisioning'. The categorisations for understanding the economic in terms of women's motivations do crime and illustrative data described above strongly indicate that women might be attracted and seduced into materialist crime for a range of reasons and consequently women's

agency and notions of greed, gain and rationalism warrant further examination in relation to the question of women and crime for economic gain.

Shoplifting has particularly been selected to illustrate how women are not motivated to do crime for gain entirely reactively nor are their motivations always and predominantly linked to duress, persuasion, coaxing or cajoling. Shoplifting cannot be entirely or exclusively understood and appreciated in terms of a desperate measure for a desperate situation where the women resort to criminal activity and a criminal solution to resolve urgent or pressing problems or economic dilemmas. Whilst all of these features are there in the exploration of women's motives, and often very strongly, they often do so in concert with other justifications that are not over-ridingly linked to poverty or directly linked to financial necessity. Other justifications include a complex combination of motives linked to drink and/or drugs or for reasons of financial and possessional desire and for luxuries, ultimately perhaps for greed. Whilst women might claim to be doing shoplifting ostensibly for the kids and others (Davies 2002/3) they might also be doing it on closer inspection for themselves and for less altruistic reasons. Rather than interpreting and exclusively couching women's shoplifting as a reactive activity, something they might be pushed and propelled into by other men, their marginal economic position and limits on their ability to become economically independent from men and/or the state, or a complex combination thereof, women's shoplifting might also be interpreted in a more liberating light as more of a pro-active activity. In this sense women who do shoplifting might be seen as forward looking and as actively seeking and searching out for a solution or a more promising future.

Stretching the notion of the economic as greed further, for some women shoplifting might evidence still greater economic business sense and signify economic rationalism that is akin to masculinist modes of motivation. This is in part seen in how Natasha and Claudia engage in risk analysis exercises and take security precautions and, like some of the other women interviewed, plan their shoplifting in advance. Natasha uses concealing apparatus – foil bags and other special means of concealment – indicating premeditated shoplifting rather than opportunist and irrational, spur of the moment loss of control type action.[11] At some junctures in their lives and on some occasions, shoplifting becomes a wilful activity, something that they are lured by. This has been seen in earlier chapters where the women plan their days shoplifting; take precautions and bags to do it and know in advance where and how to safely stash the goods. It has also been seen in how they target towns and shops and in how they travel and fund their activities. Shoplifting signifies benefits and rewards and attractions to women. In this scenario, rather than signifying the economic as altruism, their shoplifting signifies the economic as money, as profit and business and this represents freedom and escape. These latter notions recognise the economic as of worth to the women themselves. This represents the economic in selfish terms. For these women or on those occasions, women who shoplift are actively and purposefully resisting rather than passively submitting to either their material condition or to the doing of crime. These women are doing crime with intent, they are doing shoplifting resourcefully, they are using crime as an instrumental device, they

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[11] This response or reaction to the economic dilemma is rather similar to the way that the law is slowly beginning to recognise the self-defence related plea in respect of women who kill their violent and abusive intimate partners often whilst they are sleeping or apparently otherwise defenceless. This defence acknowledges the long slow build up or provocation by spouses that women experience and that impacts upon women's decision to retaliate and even kill their violent and abuse partners. This is arguably similar to the way in which women facing complex economic dilemmas might - over a period of time – acutely recognise and experience their economic dilemmas as well as the complex mix of their legal and illegal economic options. Assertive action for victims of intimate partner violence can be illegal and violent in nature, assertive and premeditated action for women facing the economic dilemmas referred to in this research can be the doing of economic crime.

are '*ladies who lift* (Brooks 2002) for a living rather than women who provision to get by.

The discussion presented above suggests that the notion of 'agency' is increasingly connected to the question of more fully appreciating and understanding how women are motivated to do crime for gain. The simple notion of a continuum has been used to demonstrate the wide spectrum that captures women's agency in the commission of crimes. Nevertheless a continuum does suggest opposite poles. At one extreme women are represented as 'gangsta bitches' and at the other women offenders are characterised as passive victims (Maher 1997). The notion of such a continuum is therefore, both helpful and unhelpful. It tends to still suggest extreme dichotomies representing the passive versus the active, the inert versus the proactive and acting. Whilst I have been critical of dichotomous characterisations earlier in this thesis (see Chapter Two and Chapter Eight) the notion of a continuum enables us to envisage women's motivations as fluid. Women's motivations might be plotted anywhere along the continuum and their motivations may be seen to oscillate between the two poles at different times in their criminal careers. Natasha and Claudia's feelings of being 'trapped' and the notion of their 'escaping' could be plotted. For example, the entrapment discourse would be plotted towards the left hand side of the continuum whereas the opposing feeling and discourse of 'escaping' would be plotted towards the other end of the continuum of human agency. Where the women's discourse is suggestive of their being 'trapped' they can be viewed as being more acted upon and relatively passive. Where their discourse presents the women as 'escaping', they can be viewed as active rather than passive and in charge of their own actions.

However, women's agency is not so simplistically explained. Natasha, for example, could be plotted on the continuum at both ends at the same time. Even the women doing economic crime so that they can also do drugs, particularly when they have families as shown earlier, display unabandoned hedonism, rather than wanton abandonment. Thus although the notion of a continuum is in part helpful the analysis moves beyond the use of the continuum model as a heuristic device. The complex experiences and interplays of the structural intersectionalities of class and gender for example are not adequately captured. A paradigm that has greater and more sophisticated explanatory power is required to capture the degrees of passivity and activity that women articulate and demonstrate, often in complex symbiosis.

Women's motivations for doing of economic crime suggest that their rationalism is qualitatively and quantitatively different to that as incorporated in the rational choice perspective for explaining crime. The meanings of rationalism and rationality in academic discourse ultimately derive from common-sense meanings and understandings. In every day usage, rationality most commonly refers to the power of reasoning and also reasonableness. To be rational is to have the faculty of reasoning and for something to be rational it has to be based on what can be tested by reasoning.

Philosophers, psychologists, economists, political scientists and sociologists have employed variations on the theme of rationality to categorise individual behaviours and group activities. Activities and behaviours have been assigned to categories and status imposed so that ultimately individuals and groups' activities are often dichotomously labelled either rational or irrational. A feature of western academic thought has been its attachment to dualism and rationality and irrationality are prime

examples of such dualisms (See Chapter Two and Appendix 1). Dualisms tend to correspond with specific notions of sex/gender and a variety of other meanings are associated with rationality that also corresponds to specific notions of masculinity and femininity. Men are rational, women are not. In the social sciences rationality is associated with the classical tradition that emphasises free will, human volition and rational choice, This school of thought followed the seventeenth century liberal philosopher Locke's discussions on man's capacity to reason and was dominant in the Beccarian era of the eighteenth century which represented a 'rationalistic hedonism' (Vold, Bernard, Snipes 1998). Present day debates surrounding rationality in sociology and criminology are often rooted in the work of Max Weber who saw a tendency to rationalise both material and ideal interests (1949, 1968). For Weber, rationality had a special place in sociological analysis. In *Economy and Society* (1968) Weber considered several meanings of rationality in the context of social action. Two main types of social action are rational: Instrumental rationality and Value-rationality whilst two further types of action are Traditional and Affectual. 'Instrumental rationality' - *Zweckrationalitat* - sees the ends of action being taken as given and signifies an individual's control over the means to reach the given aim. It is a means-end rationality or 'purpose rationality'. Social action that is 'Affectual' – *Wertrationalitat* – is value rationality and signifies an individual is driven more by short term, immediate emotional needs.

Feminist theory has more recently indicated that different conceptions of rationality may be required. Some feminist theorising has questioned and debated what actually constitutes rational knowledge (Walklate in Davies et al, 2004: 37). As Walklate has observed, the world is presented '*as if it were a masculine world; even though the*

information and arguments presented may have been done as though they encapsulate a view of the world in human terms' (Walklate 1995:19). In other words it is a 'man's world' where women are always constituted as the 'other'. Feminists from various disciplines (Ferber and Nelson 1993, Gilligan, 1984, Harding 1991, Mellor 1995, Smith 1987) have argued in this vein and they have demonstrated that the basic categories of western moral philosophy, such as rationality, autonomy and justice, are drawn from and reflect the moral experience of men rather than of women. Hence, masculine modes of conceptualisation operate (Jaggar 1983). Men have been allowed to stand in for women and much empirical work has suffered from gender ignorance. Traditional representations and comparisons between men and women have deemed men rational actors and women as irrational and impulsive. In the dualistic system of discourse, women are seen to be irrational, indeed 'woman embodies madness' (Frigon 1995:20), whereas men are rational, even when doing crime. Thus dichotomies and dualisms tend to have corresponding positive and negative as well as hierarchical classifications. Similar dichotomies are evident in criminology where some domains, methods, key assumptions and gender/sex associations are more core to the discipline than others that tend to be on the margins. A speculative criminological adaptation of the dichotomies table is provided in Appendix 8 'Dominant definition of Criminology?'[12].

Many scholars have argued about the social construction of such dualisms, challenged their authenticity, their hierarchicalism, their judgementalism and their prescriptively gendered nature (Folbre 2001, Fox Keller 1985, Gilligan 1982, Harding 1986, Mellor

12 The absent boundary line and shading indicates criminology's longer standing challenge to strict boundary divides and greater sensitivity to multiple social identities that that apparent within the discipline of economics.

1995, Miller 2002, Nelson 1996, Walklate 2001). For example in each of the tables in Appendices 1, 5 and 6 the left hand column is typically associated with strength, rigidity and the positive – attributes that have become equal to masculinity, - whilst the right hand column is associated with weakness, softness and the negative – attributes that have become equal to femininity - and feminists including feminist criminologists have confronted and challenged these social constructions and have suggested breaking down these divides and boundaries in diverse ways (Mellor 1992, 1997, Maher 1997, Miller 2002).

Conjoining versions of rationality that are akin to Weber's 'affective rationality' with versions of rationality that are concerned with a more contextual form of reasoning, as suggested by feminist writers Gilligan (1998), Harding (1991) and, within criminology, Walklate (1995; 2001) might prove useful for better understanding and appreciating why and how women are motivated to do crime for gain. Furthermore as part of the literature review in Chapter Two I briefly introduced the theoretical formulations of doing-gender/doing difference alongside the proposition of re-assessing the notion of women's rationality. Under Messerschmidt's (1993) formulation crime is a form of structured/situated action/ accomplishment, a resource for accomplishing or 'doing-gender' (West and Zimmerman 1987). Gender is omnirelevant and this formulation appears to make some sense of what crimes men and boys do, how they do them and why they do them. Men and boys achieve masculinity through the doing of violent crimes and property crime. Thus for men and boys in particular Messershmidt suggests robbery is a rational practice for 'doing-gender' and for getting money.

During the last decade a number of empirically based research studies have rendered a range of illegal activities carried out by men and boys meaningful in terms of their accomplishing masculinity. Although this work has not been without criticism it has spearheaded important developments in gender scholarship. Applications of 'doing-gender' to female crime have required refinements resulting in the additional and twin concept 'doing-difference' to explain women's involvement in violent crime and street gangs in particular. The twin concepts of 'doing-gender/doing-difference' have invoked notions of 'bad-girl' (Joe Laidler and Hunt 2001) femininity where girls in gangs are assumed to be resisting traditional notions of femininity. More recent attempts to explore the applicability of these concepts have required constant refinement to the original thesis of doing gender and similar to the discovery of multiple masculinities, women and girls are now understood to be achieving a range of femininities. More contentiously however, gender scholars have raised questions about tautology, (Hood-Williams 2001, Miller 2002, Walklate 1995) normative assumptions and dualism. Specific questions have also been posed asking whether women and girls can ever be masculine or do masculinity (Hood-Williams 2001), whether men and women can achieve 'gender-crossing' (Cross and Bagilhole 2002, Miller 2002) and whether the extension of 'doing-gender/doing difference' has any cultural resonance when applied to both men's and women's crimes (Daly 1997).

Drawing upon Messerschmidt's original formulation, for women who engage in property and other instrumental forms of crime, we might substitute shoplifting in place of robbery as women's rational practice for 'doing-gender' and for getting money. And as Messerschmidt suggests, prostitution is women's most obvious criminal resource for making money and achieving femininity. This type of femininity

is explained in terms of doing femininity differently, hence prostitutes or sex workers are doing-gender/doing-difference'.

Some of the women I interviewed might appear to be doing crime in ways that fit with the 'doing-gender' and/or 'doing-difference' theses and in Chapters Five, Six and Seven there appears to be some evidence in support of women apparently and in part, using crime as a resource for gender accomplishment. Women are using shoplifting, as they might similarly use sex work, as one of their principal criminal resources. However, the weightier evidence suggests that this is inadequate as a singular or even primary motivating factor for women doing crime for economic gain and arguments explored in the previous section strongly suggest that women's motivations for the doing of crime might be more fully appreciated and understood in the context of provisioning. This persuasive line of theorising makes the additional or complementary application of the twin concepts of doing-gender/doing-difference' attractive yet highly complex. Gender becomes no less salient but it is not omnipotent in the sense that the women are seeking ways through criminal resources first and foremost to construct a feminine identity. Following Miller's argument (Miller 2002), the accomplishment of gender for these women is not as an explicit goal, it is not a motivating factor. The analysis unfolding here suggests women's criminal activities and their motives for doing crime for gain are more complex and might be better specified.

Doing-gender clearly prioritises gender above other social divisions and characteristics that comprise identity and shape cultural experiences and practices. Doing-gender presumably logically suggests that women who do shoplifting are using

this form of crime as a resource to accomplish femininity. Women's achievement in this respect is a socially governed action, which in turn has been and is socially structured. Doing structured action ought to include illegal means for women just as it does for men. Men achieve masculinity, whereas women achieve femininity. Imported into criminology structured action theory and derivations on this theme discussed above suggest that crime is a single resource upon which men and women might call. Whilst this formulation has merit and continuities for understanding and appreciating what crimes men and boys do as well as why and how they do them, for women it seems that gender is so tied to familial relations, notions of responsibility, reciprocity and obligations, and their motivations for doing crime for gain show such a multitude of complex issues pertaining to the notion of the economic (including the economic as money as business as profit, the economic as employment and work, the economic as domestic and household related and so on), that revised formulations including gender friendly, woman-wise definitions, appreciations and understandings of gender, class, the economic and the economy are warranted.

Thus a more rigorous and sensitive gendered understanding and appreciation of property and other instrumental types of crimes is being suggested, one which requires a less normative, dualistic and dichotomous reading of masculinity and femininity. Similar to my own conceptualisation of women who do crime for gain, and of women's economic crimes and economic criminality where it is evident that for criminal women gender is tied to and inseparable from familial relations and notions of responsibility and so on, Venkatesh's (1998) research on girl gang groups also suggests that even where girls are adopting the 'bad girl' identity they do not neglect their responsibilities as young mothers and they are often preoccupied with

income generation strategies such as drug dealing. Thus, like the shoplifters I interviewed, girl gang members involved in drugs are tied to the apron strings of provisioning, as they do not escape from their normative gender roles.

This chapter is moving towards a conclusion that suggests that instead of struggling within the confines of tautological and dualistic understanding of gender which some gender scholars suggest the doing-gender/doing-difference' concepts invoke (Hood-Williams 2001, Miller 2002, Walklate 1995), a much more sophisticated articulation is necessary. What women show us gender encompasses must be an integral part of new formulations and theory building. Women who do shoplifting do not appear first and foremost to be accomplishing femininity, nor challenging traditional gender roles and femininity by competing with their male counterparts, nor do these women appear to be imitating, approximating or crossing over into masculinity and seeking gender similarity. Rather they appear in the above analysis, firmly located within the situational context of being female and impoverished and to be most commonly provisioning. Women appear to be using crime fundamentally as a resource not to achieve gender but to provide and sustain. They are responding to inequalities arising form structural power and situational exclusion. For women to provision is part and parcel of being a woman, a mother, and a partner and community member. To provision is to be female. Thus in terms of gender scholarship conclusions, gender is constantly taken for granted, it is routinised, and women keep on 'doing-gender', reconfirming it in stereotypical and traditional ways, as normative structured action. Thus, for women the need for survival and for self-sufficiency, for materialistic and non-materialistic things and rewards and their need to provision fuses with any need,

requirement or determination to accomplish gender. Gender for women encompasses motherhood, family relations, partners and kinship and community.

(vi) Conclusion

This chapter sees the culmination of several emergent themes arising from the analysis of women's motivations for doing crime for gain and specifically of those connected to notions of need, and greed, the economic and the notion of rationalism. The chapter has brought the analysis into sharper focus by summarising women's representations of the economic and showing these under a four-fold categorisation of different motivational typologies. These categories analytically depict women's understandings and appreciations of the economic and go some way towards depicting their complex relationships to broader notions of the economic. I have also embarked upon a more focussed and specific consideration of women's motivations through a discussion of women's agency and rationalism and it is in the later section of this chapter that I have focussed upon the complex and sophisticated interplay between the notions of the economic and rationalism.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION: WOMEN AND CRIME FOR GAIN:

MATERIAL CRIME AND MATERIAL WOMEN

The main aims of the thesis were to explore economic gain as an explanatory framework for women' s crime and to explore women's motives for and experience of doing economic crime. The research was conducted primarily by investigating the experience and motivations of women who do crime for gain through interviewing criminalized women. I have also drawn upon the notion of economic crime and economic criminality as it appears to be understood within criminology and in official documentations. This aspect of the research constitutes part of a re-think of how 'economic' is defined as this was found to be helpful in understanding women's motives for doing crime for gain and what might constitute economic crime for women.

Whilst the thesis is grounded in original empirical work and in particular upon criminal women's articulations of their motivations to do crime for gain, and the theoretical arguments are in part emergent, the analysis draws upon a variety of criminological scholarship and feminist work. In essence however, by focussing on the fundamental questions of how and why women do crime for gain and women's motivations for doing shoplifting in particular, but also drugs and prostitution-related offending, the apparently oppositional motivations of economic need and economic greed have featured as a major part of the analysis. The inquiry has shed considerable light upon the extent to which women's criminality can be recognised in 'economic' or 'economy' terms as demonstrated in their crime talk about their activities and in

particular their doing of crime. The economic as defined, classified, understood and experienced by women - especially so-called economically marginalised women - is likely to be less subsumed and embedded within the notion of the market-as-the-economic-as-business. The inquiry has also considered when and how women emerge as economic agents in their own right. In a detailed examination, through illustrations and theoretical analysis, I have discovered insights into the extent women's culpability and the influence of others in the commission of their crimes and have made some tentative conclusions about women's agency and women's rationalism arising from the women's explanations of motives for doing crimes such as shoplifting.

In exploring women's motivations to do crime for gain the study operates within the context of gendered offending patterns and the concept of the economic became one of the major problems of the thesis. The final chapters have drawn together some of the key issues that have pushed the analyses towards a unique conceptualisation of women's motivations to do crime for gain. Evidencing apparently contradictory motivations of need and greed, women's motivations to do economic crime are shown as complex and multi-faceted. In developing the analysis of women who do in the main shoplifting, but also drug and prostitution related crimes, the thesis demonstrates there are inconsistencies between the data on female offending and the theoretical work connected to women, gender and crime.

Several problems of theoretical connections were initially identified in Chapter Two and having empirically explored women's motivations to do crime for gain I have identified some useful avenues for theoretical analysis, some borrowed from the boys,

some building on old, some on new theoretical formulations within criminology whilst inspiration from feminist perspectives more generally has allowed for new ways of theorising to emerge from the inquiry. The penultimate chapter strongly argues the case, at both the grounded and more abstract level, for continuing to move beyond where women are doing crimes for gain **either** from economic need **or** economic greed; beyond dualistic constructions and dichotomous analyses that are only capable of addressing singular dimensions and appreciations of the notion of the economic; beyond constituting agency as rationalism and rationalism in terms of rationality or irrationality; beyond assessing determinism or voluntarism, passivity or pro-activity and finally, beyond analyses that tend to conflate notions of agency with choice.

The final analysis argues towards a more contextual form of analysis of women's crime for gain, for a more contextual understanding of the notion of the economic and for a more contextual form of reasoning and gendered form of rationality. Criminological theorising appears to have only partially explored rational motivations for the doing of crime and may impose versions of rationality on offenders or we may be making assumptions about gendered rationality, thus we may be failing to rationalize in the same way as the male and female actors themselves. Carlen and Daly's references to rationality, which are implicit rather than explicit, suggest women's lawbreaking is more akin to a Weberian form of affective rationality rather than an instrumental economic rationality. Thus, differences between forms of rationalism may lie in the distinction between instrumental and affective rationality that originates with Weber.

Having engaged in such an examination of women's motivations for doing crime for economic gain the analyses concludes that it may be fruitful to consider similarly exploring crime for gain and economic crime more generally starting from the point of prioritising gendered forms of provisioning powers. In this respect the inquiry has begun to develop a theoretical framework for more comprehensively understanding women's motivations for doing crime for gain and for a more thoroughly gendered understanding of motivations to do material crime generally.

Shoplifting in particular emerges as a common experience for criminal women whilst this tends to overshadow their participation in other crimes done for gain including a variety of different types of theft, burglary, drugs and prostitution related offences. This thesis specifically shows how the doing of shoplifting can be seen in terms of the doer satisfying several social needs – a variety of materialist and economic needs, wants and desires as well as other subsidiary and often non-economic needs and rewards. When simply surviving and every day living are increasingly costly women's resistance might take on a criminal dimension. Shoplifting could be seen as a particular response to economic and social factors, a rational response in such a context. The committing of consumer based crimes such as shoplifting, check frauds and welfare frauds are all areas of the criminal economy that women have access to. Shoplifting can be seen as a survival crime. Young women and girls might steal for *their own gain or survival* or to *get food and clothes,* to keeping the family going (Campbell 1993:216). The evidence and analysis in this thesis similarly suggests that some women appear do their crime for selfish reasons and some women's offending is more altruistic or obligatory. In my own research both motivations are evident in the majority of the women's accounts and explanations of their crimes and

criminality. The majority of women have a desire for various types of economic gain and are in survival mode. It is the degree to which the doer or their family benefits that differs and this is where the difficulty in distinguishing between women's needs and necessities and women's greed's become apparent.

Grafting or shoplifting can start out as or become a survival strategy, a means of achieving a day-to-day existence and emotional survival, and a rational way of feeding and supporting a drug habit or a prospective way of lifting themselves out of a life of poverty, a life of reliance on feckless men and/or the state and a way of lifting themselves out of hardship. In this way shoplifting might be seen not so exclusively as an act of necessity for women but also as an attractive and lucrative opportunity and prospective career and a means of earning material possessions and financial reward. The extent of women's individual culpability and the extent of their own personal agency varies between individual women and for individual women the extent to which their rationalism is 'other' as opposed to 'self'-oriented varies with both appearing to co-exist. Whilst the self-deterministic theme is particularly evident in how the women do their crime of choice – often professionally – this belies the underlying form of rationalism that is peculiar to women. Women's needs and greed are inseparable from other's needs, greed and desires. Whilst these complex motivations, comparisons and inconsistent theoretical connections have been most explicitly explored in respect of women's motivations to do shoplifting, there are similar motivational accounts arising in connection with the women's doing of prostitution and drug related crimes.

Prostitution has featured only as a minor aspect of the analysis despite this being the most obvious economic crime for women. The literature reviewed in connection with the doing of sex work throughout this thesis has focussed on the self-deterministic features of sex work rather than the exploitative features and in doing so some parallels are identified between the women's doing of sex work and their doing of shoplifting. Amongst the similarities we find that women who regularly and routinely shoplift do appear to oscillate between self-determinism[13] and something similar to the shoplifting equivalent of prostitution's sexual slavery. Women who shoplift do exhibit degrees of entrapment[14] and enslavement and to some extent they acknowledge their own exploitation by their families, friends and acquaintances.

Similarly to prostitution, the women's doing of drug dealing has featured as a minor aspect of the analysis given the limited amount of data available on this and my conclusions can be none other than speculative about women's motivations for doing drug dealing. My speculations, however, would reflect my findings in respect of shoplifting.

Crime for women, whether it be shoplifting, prostitution or drug dealing is sometimes presented by criminal women themselves as a liberating opportunity and an

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[13] The self-deterministic theme is particularly evident in how the women do their crime of choice whether that is shoplifting or prostitution or a combination of both; in the women's attitudes, their opinions about what they do and the language they use to describe their activities.

14 In exploring the various dimensions of the crime work continuum Fagan and Freeman (1999) discuss the difficulties encountered in abandoning crime for legal work and like Maguire and Walsh's burglars and robbers they note how for those deeply embedded in social networks and criminality adverse conditions are created which militate against successful legal work accomplishment. Similarly, with criminal women. Carlen notes how the subjects of her research started out their criminal careers engaging in teenage gangs, amateur shoplifting or prostitution before progressing to more serious forms of crime. In this process it became increasingly more difficult for the women to enter the conventional labour and marriage market, and more difficult for them to claim supplementary benefit without being targets of over-zealous surveillance.

experience that might enable them to be self-determining achievers. Shoplifting and prostitution are at least in part presented as forms of resistance for women. They are resources to which they can turn to engage in struggle and tools with which they can strategise to allow themselves and their dependent families to survive. However, they live in a fully gendered context. Alongside the men with whom they do illegal forms of work and with whom they are often co-accused, and for whom they make and provide money for drugs, and alongside the men who are doing the business of - often violent crime - and alongside men who are also finding alternative and additional ways of achieving masculinity, women are doing gender too. They are striving for alternative and additional ways of achieving femininity and motherhood through shoplifting and prostitution.

Doing crime for gain for these women remains an experience dominated by exploitation and marginalisation with the additional layer of complexity introduced by their and others' dependency on drugs. Twelve of the sample had no experience of work at all whilst the others' experiences of the legitimate job market might be called secondary experiences with secondary job market rewards. Similarly, their doing of crime for gain experiences might be called secondary experiences with secondary rewards. For these women the economic as business is not sufficient to lift them out of financial hardship, the economic as employment as work is not sufficiently financially lucrative, the economic as provisioning appears to be the only version of the economic that is providing reward and the women are not the primary beneficiaries here. The beneficiaries are their male partners and dependent families. Like Miller's (1998) conclusions, my own research suggests gender equality does not appear to be achieved through the doing of crime. Rather than matching the

accomplishments of the men and boys gender discriminations are being sharply reproduced and gender difference and inequality maintained.

Whilst it can be expected that the thesis conclude with a summing up in respect of the original aims it is also important to note other significant findings and observations that may warrant further criminological attention and more empirical research.

This research indicates that women do occasionally - although rarely - commit offences such as burglary. What is also clearly evident here and which confirms feminist observations of female crime, is that women are more frequently indirectly involved in such offences through their connections to offending and/or abusive men (Daly 1994). Several of the women I interviewed admitted to being co-accused with men and they admit to helping men do crime. Those co-accused of crime appear to be a little researched group within criminology. And, the obvious question is, why not look at the subset of co-accused women and their motivations. Furthermore, whilst some women actively help men do crime others provide tacit support perhaps due to complex combinations of reasons including obligation, love, friendship and fear. How gender organises the commission of crime has largely been overlooked although recent developments on masculinities have gone some way towards redeeming this (see for e.g. Messerschmidt 1993, 1997 Connell 1995).

A minor theme that has been only partially explored in this thesis concerns women doing white-collar crime for economic gain. Women's roles as participants in crime have remained poorly exposed and despite volumes of feminist material having filled in many gaps there remain distinct locations such as the workplace where women's crimes are neglected. The independent role of women as rational white-collar

criminals, as business offenders, as entrepreneurs in crime, as women who are motivated to shoplift primarily by economic greed rather than need remains under-researched. It is at junctures between what is legal/illegal, what is work/crime, that many of the invisible crimes of men and women take place. Bringing a gendered approach to the workplace as a site for criminal activity might enable us to better understand and appreciate how women do crime and criminality, why they do crime and how they are motivated.

It remains difficult to judge the extent to which there may be rational women entrepreneurs participating in white-collar crime because of its seductive attractions and rewards (Davies 2003a) and there remains little evidence from my own data to support or reject this type of hypothesis. However, in a similar vein to Goldstraw (2002, 2003), the argument in this thesis suggests there are several reasons or justifications for the doing of shoplifting, drugs offences and sex work, many of which are directly and/or indirectly 'economic' in nature but they include the notion of women doing economic crime for greed and financial gain as well as for provisioning and altruistic purposes. This same proposition could be extended to all property crime whether it be white-collar or the apparently more common other varieties committed by the majority of men and by women, too. Women who do crime for economic gain, property or material crime, appear to be doing it for a very complex set of reasons and sometimes for a combination of motives. Crime is not exclusively men's business, and it seems the assumptive myth that economic crime is a man's game might be strongly challenged. Similarly, hedonism and rationalism are not exclusively men's preserve, and neither is working within the environs of criminal economies the occupational preserve of men. Doing-gender through crime does not

only amount to doing masculinity but may also encompass the achievement of various masculinities and femininities.

There are at least three distinct areas where the findings contribute to our criminological knowledge. First, and at the most general level, there are significant themes arising in relation to the understanding of women's crime. Second but related to the first, I have explored the under use of economic gain as an explanatory framework for women's crime and third, I have developed the notion of economic gain through highlighting the differences between need and greed. My conclusions therefore relate to the difficulties in distinguishing between need and greed from a feminist perspective. My robust conclusions therefore all arise from original evidence connected to the exploration of the under-use of economic gain as an explanatory framework for women's crime. Within this explanatory framework, the evidence led to a more focussed analysis on need and greed and the difficulty in distinguishing between women's and other's needs and necessities and women's and other's greed is a major and specific finding of this thesis. There are further findings that may have broader relevance and implications for criminological scholarship concerned with understanding and explaining crime. The thesis demonstrates that it has been fruitful to explore women's motives for doing crime for gain for not only has this developed the under-use of economic crime as an explanatory framework for women's crime, but also in researching and furthering our understanding of women's motives for doing economic crime, a rethinking of how 'economic' is defined has been helpful. As a more general and tentative conclusion therefore, my research indicates that in order to more fully appreciate and understand motivations for doing property and materialist crimes and criminality it may be fruitful to revise and investigate more varied and different conceptions of what constitutes the 'economic'.

Common Dichotomies[15]

Man (masculinities)	Woman (femininities)
economy	family
economics	sociology
rational	emotional
ethic of justice	ethic of care
self	Other
workplace	Home
work	Family
provider	carer, nurturer
Action	Action
free will, deliberate	determined
goal seeking, resistance	subservient
selfish, purposeful	selfless, altruistic
active, proactive	passive, inert

[15] This table has been constructed drawing upon the work of several feminist scholars as follows: Folbre 2001, Fox Keller 1985, Gilligan 1982, Harding 1986, Jennings 1993, Mellor 1992, 1997, Miller 2002, Walklate 2001

Interview Schedule

Name:

Age: Area from:

Ethnicity: Married/Partner/Single

No of children: Sex: Ages:

Your age first pregnant:

Offence in for: Length of sentence:

Sources of Income: explore economic circumstances, paid employment record

Prison Before: Arrested/Cautioned Before:

Offending – nature and extent / means and methods / reasons

1. Tell me about why you're here - what did you do?
2. Why did you do this last thing?
3. Have you ever been in trouble before? Explore as above
4. SHOPLIFTERS

Explore: Which shops, preferences? What taken, how, why?

OTHER FRAUDS AND THEFTS

Explore as above

6. PROSTITUTION

Explore as above

7. OTHER CRIMES prompt on drugs related offending, burglary, workplace fiddles

8. Roughly how many times would you say you'd done stuff that you haven't been caught for? Say in the last year/month/week? Explore for each type of offence

9. Looking back, how do you see your crimes – explore each separately

10. How do you think about crime generally, explore male/female crimes and offending

Introduction Sheet (a)

My name is Pam Davies. I am a lecturer at the University of Northumbria doing some research about women and girls and their lifestyles and criminal activities. Most research that has been done about criminal careers looks at men and men only and I would like to find out more about your part in all this.

I would like to talk to you on a one-to-one basis about how you came to be here. I would also like to know more about the sort of offences you have committed, the reasons why you have been involved in them and who may have influenced you in all of this.

I would like to hear you talk about these issues and perhaps answer a few questions. I do not need to know your real name but I would like to take some notes from our discussion.

I hope you will agree to meet with me and I will gladly explain more about my research if you are in doubt about any part of it. I hope you will take part - this is up to you - and I look forward to meeting you.

Introduction Sheet (b)

My name is Pam Davies. I am a lecturer at the University of Northumbria doing some research about women and girls and their lifestyles and criminal activities. Most research that has been done about criminal careers looks at men and men only and I would like to find out more about your part in all this.

Sometime between Christmas and Easter I would like to talk to you on a one-to-one basis about how you came to be a part of this group. I would also like to know more about the sort of offences you have committed, the reasons why you have been involved in them and who may have influenced you in all of this.

I would like to hear you talk about these issues and perhaps answer a few questions. I would like to spend between half an hour and an hour talking and listening to you. I would like to tape record our discussion so that I can later type it up and use it to draw out some important themes. I do not need to know your real name or address and no one else will hear the tapes. If you would prefer not to have our conversation recorded I will take notes instead. Tea and coffee will be made available during our discussion and local bus fares can be paid for you to attend.

I hope you will agree to meet with me and I will gladly explain more about my research if you are in doubt about any part of it. I hope you will take part - this is up to you - and I look forward to meeting you.

Offenders found guilty at all courts or cautioned by sex and type of offence
Source: Home Office (2000) Statistics on Women and the Criminal Justice System.

England and Wales — Number of offenders (thousands)

Sex and type of offence	1990	1992	1994	1996	1998	1999
Males						
Indictable offences						
Violence against the person	60.6	57.3	51.5	43.9	51.7	48.7
Sexual offences	9.9	8.3	7.4	6.4	6.2	5.7
Burglary	55.2	56.1	47.5	40.5	37.2	35.0
Robbery	5.1	5.4	5.1	6.0	5.6	5.7
Theft and handling stolen goods	174.7	186.7	169.0	153.7	152.6	151.5
Fraud and forgery	20.4	20.5	19.1	17.6	19.1	19.3
Criminal damage	14.0	12.6	13.0	11.7	12.4	12.5
Drug offences	39.0	45.4	65.1	72.8	96.0	87.1
Other (excluding motoring offences)	33.4	37.4	39.0	43.1	48.1	46.1
Motoring offences[1]	*10.6*	*10.3*	*11.4*	*9.4*	*8.5*	*7.6*
Total indictable offences (excluding motoring offences)	423.0	439.9	428.2	405.1	437.3	419.1
Summary offences (excluding motoring offences)[2]	429.6	412.5	392.0	414.2	430.1	415.4
All offences (excluding summary motoring offences)	852.6	852.5	820.2	819.3	867.4	834.5
Females						
Indictable offences						
Violence against the person	8.6	9.7	9.7	7.9	8.9	8.2
Sexual offences	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Burglary	2.7	2.5	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.0
Robbery	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.5
Theft and handling stolen goods	59.4	71.5	63.4	54.5	56.8	55.2
Fraud and forgery	6.4	7.0	6.9	6.2	8.0	8.2
Criminal damage	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4
Drug offences	4.2	4.9	7.0	8.7	11.5	11.0
Other (excluding motoring offences)	2.9	3.4	4.4	4.8	6.5	6.4
Motoring offences(1)	*0.4*	*0.4*	*0.6*	*0.5*	*0.5*	*0.5*
Total indictable offences	86.1	101.1	95.7	86.3	96.1	93.4
Summary offences (excluding motoring offences)[2]	140.4	164.3	161.4	169.6	128.9	113.8
All offences (excluding summary motoring offences)	226.6	265.4	257.1	255.9	225.0	207.2

(1) Offenders found guilty only; motoring offences may attract written warnings.
(2) It is estimated that there are shortfalls of 6,900 offenders convicted for summary non-motoring offences in South Wales 1994.
Source Criminal Statistics England and Wales 1997.

The Contemporary Definition of Economics[16]

Core	Margin
Domain:	
public (market and government)	private (family)
individual agents	society, institutions
Efficiency	equity
Methods:	
Rigorous	intuitive
Precise	vague
Objective	subjective
Scientific	non-scientific
Detached	committed
Mathematical	verbal
Formal	informal
General	particular
Key assumptions:	
Individual	social
self-interested	other interested
Autonomous	dependent
Rational	emotional
Acts by choice	acts by nature
Gender/sex associations:	
Masculine	feminine
Men	women

[16] Reproduced as in Nelson 1996: 22

Dominant Definition of Criminology?[17]

Core	Margin
Domain:	
Public (street and market)	private (family, home)
individual agents	society, institutions e.g. government and
gangs	workplaces
Formal social controls	informal social controls
violent but visible crimes,	crimes of the powerful
street crimes	
Offenders	Victims/'pillion passengers'
Efficiency	social justice, equity
Methods:	
Rigorous	intuitive
Precise	vague
Objective	subjective
Scientific	non-scientific
Detached	committed
mathematical	verbal
Formal	informal
General	particular
Key assumptions:	
Individual	Social
Selfish, purposeful	Selfless, altruistic
self-interested	other interested
Autonomous	Dependent
Free will, deliberate	determined
rational,	emotional
instrumental	mad
goal seeking, resistance	subservient
Gender/sex associations:	
Masculine	Feminine
Men and boys	Women and girls

[17] Adapted from Nelson 1996: 22

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